
COUNSELLING SERVICES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OBIO-AKPOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of counselling services on the academic performance of secondary schools students in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor local government area. Quantitative descriptive research is conducted to determine if counselling services have any impact on secondary school student's academic performance. From the selected schools, 180 students and 20 teachers (200) were selected by proportionate stratified random sampling with stratification based on gender. The research questions was tested using mean and standard deviation, a mean criterion of 2.50 and above was accepted while a mean below 2.50 criteria was rejected. Data collection was done through the completion of questionnaires titled, "the impact of counseling services and academic performance of secondary school students" (ICSAPSSS). The study revealed that, information and orientation counseling services helps to boost academic performance of students and moreso counseling services are not readily available in most schools in Obio-Akpor local government area. The study recommends that teachers should be encouraged to refer students to the School counselor and moreso schools without functional counseling units, should establish one. Principals should also be encouraged to involve all stakeholders in ensuring that there are functional counseling units and services in the school.

Keywords: Guidance Services, Counselling Services, Therapy

Introduction

The educational system involves a process of transmitting the societal norms and values toward the development of a country. It is essential that students have access

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to guidance and counseling services (Eremie and Ibifari, 2018). Students may benefit from guidance and counseling services by gaining the information, tools, and experience they need to form their own perspectives, broaden their horizons, and ultimately find fulfillment in their chosen fields of study and in life. The country's educational services aim to improve students' access to quality education, increase the relevance of their classroom experiences, and improve the quality of instruction overall. To realize these objectives, it is crucial to provide students with the guidance and counseling services they need to reach their full potential in the classroom. Egbochukwu,(2018) defines counseling as "a procedure that takes the shape of a contractual assisting relationship between the counsellor, who is the congruent person in the relationship, and the counsellee, who is the incongruent member" (the helped). Generalizing, the purpose of counselling is to help students overcome learning challenges and other hurdles so that they may study more effectively and eventually achieve their own personal objectives.

The value of counseling is shown by the above statement. Providing students with counseling is vital not just to their academic success but also to the child's general growth and the realization of his or her aspirations in life. As a result, the student has a deeper understanding of the world around them and develops more favorable routines, abilities, and worldviews. Adolescence has a profound impact on the lives of Obio-Akpor's secondary school students, including their study habits, grades, and future plans. Students' emotional, mental, and moral insecurity speak throughout the adolescent years (Corey, 2005). Factors in students' social, educational, physical, and economic environments have been shown to influence their job choices (Eremie and Ibifari, 2018). Students' low grades have been linked to their failure to adopt the proper study habits and the wrong orientation instilled by their families and communities (Essuman, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

Secondary school Students in Obio-Akpor local government area have seen a dramatic drop in their external examination over the course of many years (WAEC Annual report; 2019). It's becoming more difficult for Nigerians to achieve their potential without formal education beyond high school, and this trend has had far-reaching consequences. With less emphasis on the benefits of studying certain subject, students may see schoolwork as a chore. Till date, there has been no effective mechanism for making Secondary school Students more reflective about their course selections and curricular decisions. Secondary school Students in Obio-Akpor local government are failing because of a perceived knowledge gap or informational deficiency. However, in schools where counselors do exist, they are often seen as nothing more than punitive employees, whose only purpose is to discipline children who are considered to be deviant or disruptive. Others don't bother to hire them at all, while others hold the view that a counselor should double as an educator so that they're not just "sitting idle" all day. Secondary school Students lack of desire, failure, and

apathy toward their academic work is a common source of frustration for both parents and educators, yet despite this, neither group has taken any concrete efforts to include therapy to help these students. In Obio-Akpor Local government, the researcher set out to determine whether and how much Counselling services helped boost the academic performance of secondary school students.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of the study is to investigate the impact of counseling services and academic performance of secondary school students in Obio-Akpor local government area

The specific objectives of the research work are:

1. To investigate the impact of information services on the academic performance of secondary school students in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor local government area of Rivers State
2. To investigate the impact of orientation services on the academic performance of secondary school students in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor local government area of Rivers State

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide this study.

1. What is the impact of information services on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor local government area?
2. What is the impact of orientation services on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor local government area?

Hypothesis

Ho₁: There is no significant effect of information services on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor local government area

Ho₂: There is no significant effect of orientation services on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor local government area

Conceptual Framework

Concept of Guidance and Counselling

Denga D. I. (2001) argues that the purpose of guiding is to help students reach their full potential as thinkers and learners. Peterson & Farewell (2012) provide a more detailed definition of academic support as the provision of assistance to students, both individually and in small groups, in order to facilitate better performance in the classroom. Educational advising enable students to gain insight into their current and future learning circumstances and to take appropriate action. Therefore, the goal of counselling is to aid the client in learning more about and developing a healthy

relationship with themselves. What counselling is and what it strives to do for the counselee is implied in the concept of counselling as shown above. According to Makinde in Agi (2020), it is a service that aids a person in analyzing himself by connecting his skills, accomplishments, interests, and receptivity to change with a new choice he has made or will have to make. Counseling, he said, is meant to foster an interactive connection in which the therapist works to educate the client about how his past experiences influence his current and future choices and challenges. In fact, as noted by Amadi (2001), counselling may also be seen as a learning process in which the counsellor assists the client or counselee in adopting behaviours that are more likely to result in positive outcomes. Ipaye (2013) agreed that one of the primary goals of therapy is to foster conditions conducive to each client's educational, social, and occupational development.

The Role of Counsellors in Secondary Schools

As a result of the fast-societal shifts that have influenced the evolution of our educational system, the need for school counsellors has grown more apparent. During the first three years of their secondary education, according to Amadi (2011), all Secondary School students are required to take all of the required courses. That holds true regardless of a person's skill level, education, work history, family situation, economic standing, level of maturity, level of interest, level of motivation, or any other variable. As a result, individuals are subjected to ongoing evaluation designed to keep bringing to their attention the areas in which they continue to fall short. These students require advice and therapy since their experiences with this sort of circumstance have left them feeling frustrated and inadequate. Fafunwa (2012), who also hinted at the relevance of guidance and counselling in schools, indicated that guidance and counselling, especially at the junior secondary school level, will play a significant role in the education and social development of people. Guidance services, as noted by Oladele (2013), provide trained professionals to help individuals and small groups with typical issues relating to their own personal development, their schooling, and their future careers. These services as put by Amadi (2011) include:

- a) Orientation services
- b) Placement services
- c) Information services
- d) Counselling services
- e) Research and follow-up services
- f) In-service programme
- g) Appraisal services.
- h) Evaluation services
- i) Public relations services

Counsellors' role, according to Unachukwu (2012), begins the moment kids step foot on secondary school premises. Students need to be oriented to the new environment and to the norms of social interaction among students before they may benefit from

mentoring. The counsellor also gathers, analyzes, and maintains appraisal information on kids for continuous assessment reasons, and she may even conduct in-service seminars on continuous evaluation for the staff.

Concept of Academic Performance

How well a student has done academically throughout the course of their time in school may be inferred from their cumulative academic achievement. Examining how well students are doing on a given assignment is a crucial part of this process. According to Adewale in Ali (2014), students' academic Performance may be used as a measure of their development as learners and as an indicator of when they are ready for the next level of instruction. In higher education, students' overall academic Performance is summarized by their cumulative grade point average (CGPA). Academic Performance is seen as a combination of a student's aptitude and effort, as stated by Steinberger in Wako (2016). Learning has taken place if and only if the student's performance improves, whereas a lackluster showing might be indicative of flaws in the learning process or other circumstances like the student being distracted by a domestic situation at home.

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the following theory: Social learning theory of Albert Bandura. Conceptualization of Social Learning Albert Bandura (1977) acknowledged the development of classical conditioning and operant conditions by behaviorists prior to his own theory of social learning, but he proposed a new notion, namely, that behavior is learnt from the environment via observational learning or modeling (Mwangi, 2014). According to Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, individuals pick up new information by emulating the actions of others around them. In the media, in the community, and in the home, children see many different types of role models. Students whose parents are abusive are more prone to behave aggressively and to become involved in criminal conduct. Persistent indiscipline, according to this view, is an indicator of difficulties in social institutions (the school and the home), and as such, schools should adopt management strategies like consultations that are acceptable to everybody. The relevance of this research is ensured by the fact that social learning theory has a direct bearing on the topic of student disciplinary problems in schools. One area where this idea finds practical application is in counseling, namely when therapists and peers provide an example of ethical conduct by being open, compassionate, and respectful with their clients. Such role models are cognizant of the influence they may have on others. Michael (2015) argues that schools' counselling departments may benefit from inviting successful models to speak about their experiences as a means of enhancing their group counselling programmes. Members of the group counselling class are expected to emulate the leader and serve as a positive example for other students. As a result, the school and the parents have considerable influence on a child's

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conduct. Students' behavioral problems at school might be greatly alleviated if their instructors and parents set positive examples.

Empirical Review

Alutu (2015) conducted a research on the availability of counseling services in secondary schools in Edo state, Nigeria, using an ex-post facto research approach. Only educators, including classroom instructors and school counselors, were included in the research. The research revealed that just 25% of Benin City's public schools had at least one full-time counselor working in them. In 2013, researchers Sophie, Ndhlovu, and Phiri investigated the current state of school counseling programs in Zambia. They used a purely quantitative research strategy based on a survey. From a total of 858 students, 732 (73.20%) said they had access to some kind of advice or counseling at school. To a similar extent, 39 (75%) of the 52 instructors who took part in the survey reported having access to some kind of advice or counseling for students. Wako (2016) conducted study in Ethiopia to evaluate the current state of counselling and guidance services, as well as the obstacles that prevent them from effectively addressing students' emotional and academic needs in a subset of secondary schools in the Sidama Zone. Two hundred and fifty-eight students, three guidance counsellors, and four school administrators took part in the research, which was conducted using a descriptive survey approach. Due to a lack of knowledge about the service and a tenuous connection between school counselors and the school community, the research found that the vast majority of students do not make enough use of school guidance and counselling services to succeed academically. Professional abilities of school counselors, lack of policy guidance concerning the program, and administrative issues all play a role in the service being underutilized. Guidance and Counselling services were implemented in secondary schools in Eritrea to help students with social, personal, psychological, educational, and occupational issues. It was also used to aid educators in handling classroom disruptions (MoE, 2002 in Ghebrehiwet E. A. (2019). Guidance and counselling professionals in schools were provided with a handbook or manual to educate instructors in 2005, and many high school teachers were prepared to serve as trainers for their colleagues (MoE, 2013 in Ghebrehiwet E. A. (2019).

Methodology

The study used an ex-post facto (causal-comparative) research design. The study's design reflects the researchers' interest in the impact of the guidance and counseling program on students' academic achievement, which is the study's independent variable. The research was conducted in a subset of secondary institutions in the Obio-Akpo LGA. In Obio-Akpor LGA, there are 248 secondary schools that have been officially recognized (From the Department of Statistics, Rivers State Ministry of Education, 2013) In Obio-Akpor there are estimated 197,560 secondary school instructors and students (Rivers state secondary school board, 2020). The study location was chosen in part because of data showing that students in the selected

schools score poorly on nationally named assessments. This highlighted a gap in the guidance and counselling services at the chosen schools, which were not adequately addressing the scholastic, social, emotional, psychological, and vocational problems students were encountering. Subjects for this research were twenty educators and one hundred and eighty secondary school students from five different schools in Obio-Akpor. The schools are: Community Comprehensive Secondary School Igurita, Akpor Grammer School, Archdeacon Crowther Memorial Girls' School, Community Secondary School Rumuapara, and Community Secondary School Rumuekini. The five schools were chosen using the purposive sampling method. From among the five schools, a simple random selection method was used to choose the participants. After getting approval from the relevant authorities at the school, data were gathered from the chosen respondents. Data were cleaned, coded, and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to help us answer our study objectives. Descriptive analyses summed up the information, gave structure to the analysis, and outlined the characteristics of the study's population. The whole population was extrapolated from a small sample using inferential statistics.

Data Analysis and Presentation

This outline presents the analysis of data obtained from the field; they were arranged according to various research questions. Below are the results of the research as stated here in

Table 1: Distributions of Respondents by their Sex

SEX	NO	PERCENT%
MALE	140	70
FEMALE	60	30
TOTAL	200	100

Source: Author 2022

Research Question 1: What is the impact of information services on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor local government area?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on Impact of Information Services on the Academic Performance of Students in Public Secondary Schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	STD	X	REMARK
1	adequate information services provided to students enhances academic performance	85	65	35	15	0.74	3.1	Accepted
2	Counselors are on ground to provide one on one information services to students	82	63	43	12	1.04	3.08	Accepted
3	The available information services infrastructure is adequate to meet the students population size.	95	60	25	20	1.15	2.98	Rejected

Research question 2, sought to evaluate the impact of information services on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in ObioAkpor local government area. Items 1 had the highest mean values of 3.1 which stated that adequate information services provided to students enhances academic performance. Conclusively, all the respondents on the impact of information services on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor local government area.

Research Question 2:What is the impact of orientation services on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the Impact of Orientation Services on the Academic Performance of Students in Public Secondary Schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area?

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	STD	X	REMARK
4	adequate orientation services provided to students enhances academic performance	100	50	15	35	0.96	3.11	Accepted
5	Orientation services is regular and consistent in the school system	60	90	10	40	0.92	2.90	Accepted
6	Orientation services provided to students meets the needs of the school population size	100	50	15	35	0.96	3.08	Accepted

In research question 3, the researcher seeks to sample the respondents view on the impact of orientation services on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor local government area. From the table above, all the items were accepted. Item 4 stated that adequate orientation services provided to students enhances academic performance which had the highest mean value of 3.11. Conclusively the respondents had a good knowledge onthe impact of orientation services on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in ObioAkpor local government area

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One (H₀₁):There is no significant effect of information services on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor local government area

Table 4 Chi-Square Tests on significant effect of information services on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor local government area

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.970 ^a	2	.031
Likelihood Ratio	7.182	2	.028
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.488	1	.011
N of Valid Cases	200		

a. 0 cells (11.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.86.

Table 4 revealed that at 0.05 significance level and degree of freedom (df) 2. The λ^2 -calculated value is 6.970 while the λ^2 -critical value is 5.991. Since λ^2 -calculated value is greater than the λ^2 -critical value. The null hypothesis is rejected hence, there is a significant effect of information services on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor local government area

Hypothesis Two (H₀₂): There is no significant effect of the impact of orientation services on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor local government area

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Table 5: Chi-Square Tests on significant effect of the impact of orientation services on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor local government area

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.973 ^a	2	.011
Likelihood Ratio	9.164	2	.010
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.600	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	200		

a. 1 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.14.

Table 5 shows that at 0.05 significance level and degree of freedom (df) 2. The λ^2 -calculated value is 8.973 while the λ^2 -critical value is 5.991. Since the λ^2 -calculated value (8.973) is greater than the λ^2 -critical value (5.991), the null hypothesis is rejected hence there is a significant effect of the impact of orientation services on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor local government area

Discussion of Findings

The first hypothesis which states that there is no significant effect of information service on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor local government area was rejected. This indicates that the information service is crucial in improving students' academic achievement. Nnachukwu's writings (2000) in Nnachukwu(2012), in which he argues that students should be exposed to global and local knowledge necessary for their growth, provide support for this idea.

The second hypothesis which states that there is no significant effect of orientation services on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpor local government area was rejected. Students get a sharper focus on academic success thanks to orientation programs. The two of them accept one another and their differences. According to Ukaegbu (2004), students may learn to put their own concerns in context by comparing them to those of other students and by talking about these issues with faculty and staff who have been through similar situations. Based on the results of the investigation, it was determined that Obio-Akpor LGA students with guidance and counseling services will do well. The most common types of services provided are those related to providing information and facilitating student orientation. According to the results, all of the services have a beneficial effect on the educational outcomes for all students. However, the results also showed that majority of the studied schools still lack appropriate and efficient services to satisfy the needs of their student populations.

Conclusion

Counseling is lifelong and all encompassing, touching the different aspects of the educational life of the child. The counsellor's role, therefore, is to devise effective remedial and therapeutic strategies for addressing students' undesirable qualities and behaviors that get in the way of an effective classroom teaching and learning environment. This activity has to take place on a consistent and timely basis in order to provide an external (physical) and internal (psychological) climate that is optimal for learning and yields students who perform at their highest levels due to a deeper grasp of the material covered. Based on the results, it is clear that providing students with access to high-quality counseling services can have a significant positive effect on their academic performance, helping them do better on standardized tests and ultimately addressing a major cause of the current crisis in educational outcomes. Even more importantly, it will promote innovation and technical growth across the nation.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are provided based on the findings

1. Adequate and consistence guidance and counseling services should be provided to the students.
2. Counselors need to be trained and retrained to ensure they are providing services that are on par with the international standards for guidance and counseling.
3. the government should make an effort to hire additional guidance counselors, particularly at schools with big student bodies
4. Students should seek counseling not just when they are unsure about what courses to take but also when they need assistance boosting their grades in certain courses.
5. the federal, state, and local governments, as well as the federal and state ministries of education and other educational stakeholders, should establish mechanisms to implement and track the success of these initiatives for reform

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