

**Influence of Guidance and Counselling on Academic Performance of Students in Aniocha
South Local Government Area, Delta State**

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Abstract

This research explores how guidance services influence the academic performance of students in public secondary schools within Aniocha South Local Government Area, Delta State, Nigeria. With increasing concern over poor academic outcomes and behavioural challenges among students, the study seeks to find out influence of guidance and counselling service on academic performance of senior secondary school students. A descriptive survey design was employed, using a structured questionnaire administered to a selected sample of students. The collected data were analysed. The results indicate that guidance services play a vital role in enhancing students' academic performance of senior secondary school student. Services such as orientation, appraisal, information, counselling and placement were shown to help students plan their educational goals, adopt better study techniques and manage personal and environmental issues that may hinder their academic performances. Based on the findings, the study recommends that timely orientation service, frequent information services to students and other essential services. The research contributes to existing literature by demonstrating how structured counselling services can positively shape the academic achievements of secondary school students in Nigeria.

Keywords: Guidance and Counselling, Academic Performance, Behavioural Challenges, Counselling Intervention

Introduction

Education is one of the major instruments for individual advancement and national development. However, secondary school students often encounter academic, social, emotional, and vocational challenges that adversely affect their academic performance. As a result of this, guidance and counselling services have been incorporated into school systems to help students understand themselves, make informed decisions, and cope with the challenges of life. The major objective of guidance is to help students develop self-understanding and make right educational and vocational choices. On the other hand, counselling provides psychological support that helps to balance emotions and personal adjustment, as pointed out by Oluwatimilehin and Adebayo (2020) and Asogwa et al. (2022). At the secondary school level, guidance and counselling programmes address students' academic difficulties, behavioural issues, career confusion, and socio-emotional problems, which complement secondary school instruction and improve learning outcomes. Some research findings indicated that effective school counselling improves students' study habits, motivation, discipline, and emotional well-being, which are essential for improved academic performance (Okunade & Suleiman, 2019; Adewumi & Oloyede, 2022).

In Nigeria, guidance and counselling were formally introduced into the educational system through the National Policy on Education, which creates room for students' holistic development (Federal Ministry of Education, 2019). Although this policy made this provision but so many schools in Nigeria do not actually implement. The lack of implementation is due to poor funding, a shortage of trained counsellors, weak administrative support, and low students' awareness (Usman & Yakubu, 2021; Obiweluzo & Adeoye, 2023). These challenges raise concerns about the extent to which guidance and counselling services influence students' academic performance, particularly in public secondary schools in Aniocha South Local Government Area of Delta State.

Statement of the Problem

The Nigerian public secondary schools' academic performance has continued to be of concern among stakeholders in education. The continuous poor performance in internal and external examinations has been attributed to factors such as inadequate teaching resources, ineffective instructional methods, unfavourable home environments, low student motivation, and psychological challenges among students (Adewale & Olorunfemi, 2021; Egbochuku, 2022).

However, insufficient attention has been given to the role of guidance and counselling services in addressing these academic challenges.

In spite of guidance and counselling being designed to help students manage academic stress, develop effective study habits, make career choices, and resolve personal-social problems, research has shown that these services are either poorly implemented or grossly underutilised in many Nigerian public secondary schools (Makinde, 2021; Obiweluozo & Adeoye, 2023). Research has shown that a large number of schools lack trained professional counsellors, functional counselling units, and have inadequate facilities, thereby hindering students' access to these essential support services (Nwachukwu & Akinade, 2024).

Ojo & Alade (2020) and Idowu (2021) pointed out that negative student attitudes, cultural misconceptions, stigmatisation, and lack of confidentiality discourage students from seeking counselling services even when available. As a result, many students continue to struggle with academic difficulties, emotional instability, poor decision-making, and maladaptive behaviours that negatively affect their academic performance.

In spite of this research conducted on guidance and counselling in Nigeria, there remains a paucity of empirical evidence specifically examining the influence of guidance and counselling services on students' academic performance in public secondary schools within Aniocha South Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria. This gap has necessitated this research.

Literature Review

Recent research underscores the importance of guidance and counselling in improving students' academic performance. Various studies have shown the role of guidance and counselling services in improving students' academic performance, motivation, self-concept, study skills, and emotional resilience as pointed out in the studies of Choiriyah & Al-Kattani (2020) and Waheed et al., (2020). Aslam, Saeed, & Muneer (2021) reported that absence of structured counselling programmes contributes to maladjustment, indiscipline, and poor academic performance among secondary school students.

Omoniyi (2020) and Yusuf (2019) in their studies revealed that students who are always involved in counselling services show a better academic performance than other students who do not. But the application and availability in Nigerian secondary schools remain inadequate. The study carried out by Obiweluozo & Adeoye (2023) revealed that less than 35% of public

secondary schools in Nigeria have full-time professional counsellors, while inadequate facilities and poor policy implementation further worsen the situation.

Issues of students' attitudes toward guidance and counselling are also of great concern among stakeholders in education. Adewale & Olorunfemi (2021) and Nwachukwu & Akinade (2024) in their studies observed that positive attitudes improve engagement and academic performance. Also, negative perceptions, stigma, and cultural beliefs affect patronage. Additionally, there is also the issue of high student-to-counsellor ratios and limited professional development opportunities for counsellors, which reduces the quality of counselling intervention services, as pointed out by Egbochuku (2022).

From the above, there is a strong relationship between effective guidance and counselling services and improved academic performance, but the number of studies at the local government level remains limited, necessitating further investigation.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To determine the influence of counselling service on academic performance
2. To determine the influence of orientation service on academic performance
3. To determine the influence of information service on academic performance

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent are the influences of counselling service on academic performance in public secondary schools in Aniocha Local Government Area, Delta state?
2. To what extent are the influence of orientation service on academic performance in Aniocha Local Government Area, Delta state?
3. To what extent are the influence of information service on academic performance in Aniocha Local Government Area, Delta state?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were developed to analyse the data for the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between counselling services and academic performance of secondary school students.
2. There is no significant relationship between orientation services and their academic performance of secondary school students.
3. There is no significant relationship between information service and academic performance of secondary school students.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design is considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to gather, analyse, and interpret data from a sample representing a population to describe the current situation without manipulating variables. It enables the investigation of how guidance and counselling services influence students' academic performance using standardized questionnaires. This design has been effectively used in similar studies (Adewumi & Oloyede, 2022).

The population of the study consisted of senior secondary school students (SS1–SS3) enrolled in public secondary schools within Aniocha South LGA. The estimated number of students in this category is approximately 2,800. A sample size of 100 students was selected for the study using multi-stage sampling technique, combining stratified random sampling and simple random sampling. Schools were stratified based on gender composition (co-educational, boys-only, and girls-only). From each selected school, students were randomly chosen across SS1, SS2, and SS3 classes using a table of random numbers. This method ensured that every student had an equal chance of being selected, reducing sampling bias.

The main instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: "Impact of Guidance and Counselling Services on Secondary School Academic Performance Questionnaire (IGCSSAPQ)." The instrument was validated by experts in Guidance and Counselling and Measurement & Evaluation at the Faculty of Education, University of Delta. The instrument was presented to an expert in Guidance and Counselling to ascertain the content and face validity, while expert in Measurement & Evaluation also certify that the instrument is appropriate for the study. The reliability of the instrument was obtained using test-retest method with a reliability coefficient of 0.73.

Ethical approval was obtained from the appropriate educational authorities, assured of the voluntary nature of their participation, guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality.

The research questions were answered using Frequency count, weighted score, mean and standard deviation. Items with mean value of 2.50 and above were accepted for the study while items below 2.50 were rejected. The hypotheses were analysed using Chi-square statistics. Hypothesis with chi-square calculated value greater than critical value the null hypothesis is rejected while the hypothesis with chi-square calculated value less than or equal to the critical value are accepted.

Presentation of Results and Discussions of Findings

Data presentation and data analysis were discussed by answering the research questions and analysing the hypotheses.

Research Question 1: To what extent are the influences of counselling service on academic performance in public secondary schools in Aniocha Local Government Area, Delta state?

Table 1: Influence of Counselling Service on Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Aniocha Local Government Area, Delta state

S/N	ITEMS	SA		A		D		SD		TOTAL		\bar{x}	STD	DECISION
		FC	WS	FC	WS	FC	WS	FC	WS	FC	WS			
1	My school has a designated counselling office.	0	0	10	30	30	60	60	60	100	150	1.50	0.67	Reject
2	A qualified school counsellor is available in my school.	3	12	15	45	35	70	47	47	100	174	1.74	0.82	Reject
3	Students are aware of the availability of counselling services.	2	8	6	18	56	112	36	36	100	174	1.74	0.66	Reject
4	Students can freely approach the school counsellor when they need help.	30	120	26	78	27	54	17	17	100	269	2.69	1.07	Accept
5	Counselling services are easily accessible during school hours.	25	100	27	81	27	54	21	21	100	256	2.56	1.08	Accept
Aggregate Mean												2.05	Reject	
Benchmark = 2.50														

Analysis of Table 1 revealed that, Item 1 strongly agree 0% response, agree 10% response, disagree 30%, 60% students strongly disagree. Item 2 strongly agreed 3%, 15% agree, 35% disagree while 47% strongly disagree. Item 3 show 2% of the student strongly agree 6%. 56% of students disagree 36% students strongly disagree. Item 4 equally revealed that 30% of the students strongly agree 26% agree while 27% of students disagree and 17% strongly disagree. Item 5 revealed that 25% strongly agree 27% agree, 27% disagree and 21% strongly disagree. The aggregate mean of 2.05 is rejected since it is below the benchmark of 2.50. Therefore, guidance and counselling services are not available in public secondary schools in Aniocha Local Government Area of Delta state

Research Question 2: To what extent are the influence of orientation service on academic performance in Aniocha Local Government Area, Delta state?

Table 2: Influence of Orientation Service on Academic Performance in Aniocha Local Government Area, Delta state

S/N	ITEMS	SA		A		D		SD		TOTAL		\bar{x}	STD	DECISION
		FC	WS	FC	WS	FC	WS	FC	WS	FC	WS			
1	The orientation programme in my school helps me adjust better to the school environment.	28	112	30	90	24	48	18	18	100	268	2.68	1.07	Accept
2	Through orientation services, I have learned effective study habits that improve my academic performance.	30	120	26	78	26	52	18	18	100	268	2.68	1.09	Accept
3	Orientation programmes help students understand school rules that support better academic performance.	30	120	26	78	24	48	20	20	100	266	2.66	1.11	Accept
4	Orientation services guide students on how to manage their time for academic activities.	41	164	28	84	15	30	16	16	100	294	2.94	1.09	Accept
5	Orientation programmes help students become more focused on their academic goals.	19	76	22	66	28	56	31	31	100	229	2.29	1.10	Accept
Aggregate Mean											2.65		Accept	

Analysis of Table 2 show that Item 6, 28% of students strongly agree, 30% agree, 24% disagree 18% strongly disagree. In Item 7, 30% strongly agree 26% of students agree, 26% disagree. In Item 8, 30% of students strongly agree, 26% agree, 24% disagree while 20% strongly disagree. Item 9, 41% strongly agree, 28% agree, 15% of students disagree while 16% of students strongly disagree. Item 10, 19%of students strongly agree, 22% of students agree, 28% of students disagree 31% strongly disagree. The aggregate mean of 2.65 is accepted because is above the benchmark hence we accept that orientation services improves academic performance of senior secondary school students.

Research Question 3: To what extent are the influence of information service on academic performance in Aniocha Local Government Area, Delta state?

Table 3: Influence of Information Service on Academic Performance in Aniocha Local Government Area, Delta state

S/N	ITEMS	SA		A		D		SD		TOTAL		\bar{x}	STD	DECISION
		FC	WS	FC	WS	FC	WS	FC	WS	FC	WS			
1	Information services in my school provide students with useful academic guidance.	28	112	36	108	17	34	19	19	100	273	2.73	1.07	Accept
2	Students receive adequate information about subject choices through the guidance and counselling unit.	17	68	18	54	43	86	22	22	100	230	2.30	1.02	Reject
3	Information services help students understand the importance of studying regularly.	26	104	24	72	27	54	23	23	100	253	2.53	1.11	Accept
4	Information services in my school help students make better educational decisions.	27	108	30	90	23	46	20	20	100	264	2.64	1.08	Accept
5	Students are informed about different learning opportunities that can improve their academic performance.	20	80	23	69	28	56	29	29	100	234	2.34	1.10	Reject
Aggregate Mean											2.51		Accept	

Analysis of Table 3 revealed that Item 11 has a mean score of 2.73 which is above the benchmark of 2.50, we therefore accept that Information services in my school provide students with useful academic guidance. Item 12 with a mean score of 2.30 is rejected. Therefore, students do not receive adequate information about subject choices through the guidance and counselling unit. Item 13 with a mean score of 2.53 is accepted an indication information services help students understand the importance of studying regularly. Item 14 with a mean score of 2.64 is accepted. It therefore implies that information services in my school help students make better educational decisions. Item 15 with a mean score of 2.34 is rejected as it is below the benchmark hence, students are not informed about different learning opportunities that can improve their academic performance as a result of inadequate school guidance services in most public schools in in Aniocha Local Government Area, Delta state.

The aggregate mean of 2.51 is accepted as it is above the benchmark, hence we therefore conclude that information services influences academic performance in Aniocha Local Government Area, Delta state.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between counselling services and academic performance of secondary school students.

Table 4: Chi-Square distribution statistics on the relationship between counselling services and academic performance of secondary school students

Test Statistic	Value	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Critical Value ($\alpha = 0.05$)
Pearson Chi-Square	36.76	19	.000	30.14
Likelihood Ratio	.000	.000	.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Assoc.	.000	.000	.000	.000
No. of Valid Cases	20			

Decision: Since the X^2 -calculated is greater than the X^2 critical at 0.05 level of significance, we reject H_0 . Therefore, there is a significant relationship between counselling services and academic performance of secondary school students.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between orientation services and their academic performance of secondary school students.

Table 5: Chi-Square distribution statistics on the relationship between orientation services and their academic performance of secondary school students

Test	Value	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Critical Value ($\alpha = 0.05$)
Pearson Chi-Square	49.17	19	0.0018	30.14
Likelihood Ratio	.000	.000	.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.000	.000	.000	.000
Number of Valid Cases	20			

Decision: Since the X^2 -calculated value of 49.17 is greater than the X^2 critical of 30.14 at 0.05 level of significance, we reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is a relationship between orientation services and their academic performance of secondary school students.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between information service and academic performance of secondary school students.

Table 6: Chi-Square distribution on the relationship between information service and academic performance of secondary school students

Test	Value	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Critical Value ($\alpha = 0.05$)
Pearson Chi-Square	45.32	19	0.0018	30.14
Likelihood Ratio	.000	.000	.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.000	.000	.000	.000
Number of Valid Cases	20			

Decision: Since the X^2 -calculated value of 45.32 is greater than the X^2 critical value of 30.14 at a 0.05 level of significance, we reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between information service and academic performance of secondary school students.

Discussion of Findings

From the analysis of result in this study, guidance and counselling services are largely inadequate and not easily accessible in public secondary schools in Aniocha South Local Government Area of Delta State. Majority of students agreed that there is absence of counselling services, lack of a designated counselling office, and lack of awareness of such services in their schools. Although some students indicated that counsellors were approachable where available.

The results of the findings revealed an aggregate mean of 2.05 which is below the 2.50 benchmark, an indication of inadequate counselling services in the schools in Aniocha Local Government Area of Delta State. The hypothesis testing also revealed a significant relationship between counselling services and academic performance of secondary school students, which led to the rejection of the hypothesis. This confirms that inadequate services and accessibility negatively affect students' academic performance. The findings are in line with Muzumara (2022) and Omotola (2021), who emphasised the role of effective counselling services in enhancing academic performance, but Fasoni (2022) argued that other factors, such as cognitive abilities and home environment, can also affect academic performance.

The study equally revealed that there is a relationship between orientation services and their academic performance of secondary school students. This equally pointed out that adequate and timely orientation services will improve academic performance. The hypothesis test revealed a significant relationship between orientation services and their academic performance of secondary school students. This study corroborates with Lubawa (2021) and Benard & Achegbulu (2018), their findings pointed out that effective counselling service enhance academic performance. However, Eyo et al. (2007) noted that students' academic performance is more influenced by factors such as gender and school location and not necessarily only counselling services.

The results of the findings also note the role of information services on academic performance of the senior secondary school students. The information services provides useful information on academic performance, helps students to understand importance of reading regularly, helping students to make a better education decision and informing students about different learning opportunity that will improve their academic performance and a better decision concerning their future career. Hypothesis testing shows a significant relationship between information service and academic performance of secondary school students. This agrees with the findings of Fashina (2020) and Akpan & Udoudom (2018), in their findings pointed out that effective and personalised counselling improves students' academic performance. But, Ateequ (2022) noted that the presence of guidance and counselling services alone does not guarantee improved academic performance, he noted the importance of proper implementation of other contextual factors.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that guidance and counselling play a pivotal role in shaping students' academic performance by organising regular orientation services and constantly informing students about their academics and future career. In spite of these advantageous guidance and counselling services, many public schools still lack functional counselling units and professional counsellors which restrict students from benefitting fully from such support. Improving availability, access, and student participation in counselling services is therefore essential for educational development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends the following:

1. The State Ministry of Education and Local education authorities should ensure that professionally trained guidance counsellors are assigned to all secondary schools in Delta State.
2. Schools should ensure awareness programs and orientations to inform students about the availability and benefits of counselling services as it influence academic performance.
3. Regular information should be provided to the students on importance of counselling services and its implication on their academic performance.
4. Counselling services should be incorporated into the school timetable, and accessible hours should be clearly communicated to students.
5. Schools should take steps to constantly inform the students on the benefits of regularly accessing the school guidance services and programme.

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