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Assessment, Benefits and factors that affect Guidance, Counselling Services in Secondary Schools in Owo Local Government, Ondo State.

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Abstract

Background: Guidance and counselling services is one important component of the school healthcare curricular activities.

Objective: This study assessed guidance and counselling services, identified the benefits and factors, as well as the effectiveness of guidance counselling. Researchers also developed two hypotheses as thus: relationship between and attitude towards guidance counselling; relationship between guidance counselling services to secondary school students and academic performance

Methodology: Both the theoretical and empirical literature were reviewed in line with the three study objectives/hypotheses. The study adopted a quantitative design using a descriptive approach, simple random sampling technique and Taro Yamane's framework were utilized as technique and 192 sample size determinants from a 368 population respectively. Data were collected with a self-structured questionnaire and were analyzed using frequency count, percentages and bar charts. Pearson Chi-Square was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

Findings: The assessment of guidance counselling facilities revealed inadequate funds, lack of counselling materials and resources, lack of good ICT equipment, unconducive counsellor's office, unfavorable school policy, parental factors, and recruitment of unqualified school counsellors as factors hindering effective guidance and counselling services in secondary schools. However, researchers identified some respondents benefited positively from school guidance and counselling services; a significant relationship between the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services and students' performance; which encouraged positive attitude towards school attendance, promotes academic performance and enhanced self-esteem as well as improved decision-making skills as benefits of guidance and counselling services.

Recommendation/Conclusion: Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommend that guidance counsellors in secondary schools should make use of effective guidance counselling approaches that will enable them to meet the needs of all stakeholders (teachers, students & counsellors) in schools, and the government must also be actively involved in providing their support where necessary towards the effectiveness of school guidance and counselling services.

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Introduction

Guidance and counselling in schools was introduced for different reason(s) in different countries, amongst other reasons were: in the wake of the negative effect of industrial growth, to provide succour to those affected. Secondly, an increasing population of students entering schools and a corresponding neglect of human conditions in every sector, and that includes school, necessitated the introduction of school guidance counselling services in the USA early 1900s to ensure students know the task ahead, since it was observed that, *“students have personal problems for which they need help. Every student needs help in formulating a workable philosophy of life and in developing goals outside the spheres of vacation and education. Personal growth and development is an important consideration at the secondary school level, counsellors can do much to aid the students in developing their personality and building attitudes conducive to a full and happy life”* (Moser & Moser 1963; quoted in Owoni, 2015). And also to assist students with their educational development and career aspiration in good health. However, in most instances, essential services required to accomplish this laudable programme in secondary schools are seemingly under-provided (Ijere 2015). This study intends to assess guidance and counselling services and to ascertain what the secondary school students in Owo Local Government, Ondo State stand to benefit from the services. In this study, the background information would caption and present the keywords in no particular order.

Background to the Study

The United Nations (UN) evaluation group under the auspices of WHO defines assessment as logical and unbiased as possible of a programme of activity or institutional performance which focuses on anticipated and achieved successes, examining the results, contextual factors and causality, in order to understand achievements or the lack thereof. In this context, assessment is determining the significance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the interventions and

contributions of schools with regards to guidance counselling (WHO, 2022). The essence is that assessment creates the framework for accountability; availability and use of resources in order to facilitate learning from experience in ways that can be put into practical use as well as influence policy and operational decisions. In another sense, assessment could be viewed as the systematic basis for making inferences about the learning and development of students by defining, selecting, designing, collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and using information to increase students' learning and development (WHO, 2022). Thus, the assessment of guidance and counselling services is a huge topic of interest for researchers in recent years, given, it involves collecting data for better understanding (Ribadu, 2021). This is important for the development of teaching and learning processes and that includes guidance counselling services, which enables teachers/students to draw inferences from the information obtained and act accordingly. Such actions may aid in making the necessary improvement in the type of guidance and counselling services provided, or simply provide a picture in time of students' competence or achievement based on their use of these services (Black & William, 2018).

Globally, guidance and counselling is an integral part of schooling, and a lot of emphasis has been laid on its implementation to ensure that its objectives are realised. Dogan and Erkan (2001) way back identified at least four (4) types of counselling and at least ten (10) guidance services as: personal, educational, vocational and parental guidance counselling. Others are legal guidance and therapeutic guidance and counselling, which are briefly expanded in no particular order below: -

Orientation services: for incoming students and for transfer to a new programme. Individual inventory services: individual inventory service is an important type of guidance service which may be recognized often as "pupil's" inventory service. Information services: Information actually plays a vital role in each and every guidance programme. Information service assists students to be self-dependent, self-cautious, and self-regulatory with full confidence and satisfaction in this competitive and complex world in taking mature decisions in different spheres of life as regards educational information, occupational information and personal-social information. Counselling services: Which could be directive, non-directive and eclectic types of counselling services are an integral part of the guidance programme. Counselling service is not a recent idea, and the service has some wide applications in different social setups such as in the family, school, medical, other counselling centres etc. Counselling services may be provided by parents to children in the family, by teachers to students in school, by doctors to patients in medical and so on to overcome the problems that occur in their lives (Fulya Yuksel-Sahin & Yildiz 2009). Placement services: is a kind of guidance service which is especially carried on by teachers on guidance workers to assist students to find out their own place in the educational setting in the occupational world considering their abilities, interests, skills, aptitudes, and attitudes. Referral services: are specialized services rendered to ensure the student is referred to a higher setting for guidance counselling (Fulya Yuksel-Sahin & Yildiz 2009). Remedial services: Like the referral services, the remedial service is a kind of specialized service which is meant for exceptional children such as students having speech defects, hardship of hearing, incapability of reading and developing study habits etc. Research services: The research service helps guidance personnel to evaluate the achievement of the students in the context of their goals. Follow-up services: Follow-up services are considered important guidance services which are intended to evaluate and ascertain the student's progress and performance in the context of educational career and activities and progress in the job placement. Evaluative services: this process of guidance is conducted from planning to

the conclusion of the entire process of guidance provided in the school through periodic information collection in respect of planned academic or school healthcare aimed at determining the level of effectiveness, efficacy, and general students' needs satisfaction (Fulya Yuksel-Sahin & Yildiz 2009; **Thakur, 2020**). Alemu (2013) and Wambui (2015) found that few students sought counselling services in secondary schools in Kiambu County of Kenya. But recent types of services rendered in schools identified by Thakur, (2020) are presented in the diagram below.



Figure 1. Types of Guidance. Excerpt from (Thakur, 2020)

Although it is well over a decade, with regards to the ratio of teachers to students, Istanbul Turkey writers, Fulya Yuksel-Sahin and Yildiz (2009) quoted from special education, guidance and counselling management's data of 2004, in which, it states the ratio of students per one (1) school to the number of counsellors as 550 and at other times 4255 (Ozel *et al*, 2007). In response to these figures, Fulya Yuksel-Sahin and Yildiz (2009) also quoted Dogan and Erkan (2001) that the psychological counsellor-to-student proportion needs to be defined rationally for an effective presentation of developmental counselling and guidance services program in the country's secondary institutions by suggesting the least proportion as *1:100* and *maximum proportion of 1:300* Fulya Yuksel-Sahin and Yildiz (2009) also quoted Dogan and Erkan (2001). But this proportion can vary between 1:500-1:1000 in the first-grade elementary school. Again, the same authors also presented results of various guidance counselling services utilization level of selected institutions, which is presented verbatim below:

"consultation (M=17.05, SD=6.22,48.71%), counselling (M=16.83, SD=6.13, 48.09%), information gathering and outreach (M=16.54, SD=5.73, 47.26%), appraisal (M=16.45, SD=5.58,47%), orientation (M=15.79, SD=5.75,

45.11%), placement ($M=15.49$, $SD=5.73$, 44.26%), research and evaluation ($M=15.18$, $SD=5.83$, 43.37%), public and family relations ($M=15.08$, $SD=5.31$, 43.09%) and follow-up ($M=14.43$, $SD=5.45$, 41.23%) services" (Fulya Yuksel-Sahin and Yildiz (2009) also quoted Dogan and Erkan (2001).

Results of this study showed that overall 45.31 %

of all counselling and guidance services were offered (Fulya Yuksel-Sahin and Yildiz 2009). In light of these assertions, it is expedient to ascertain the various guidance and counselling services available in the schools under review to get stuck and to offer clarity of learning and development in terms of guidance counselling and accomplishments, in consonance with the State's school guidance counselling objectives at a point in a particular stage of development of an institution.

In Africa, the concept of guidance and counselling although relatively new in educational systems, has been embraced by most governments (UNESCO, 2017). In recent times, considerable progress has been made setting up administrative structures for the provision of guidance and counselling services in educational institutions to enhance the personal, educational and vocational development of students. For example, the genesis of formal guidance and counselling in Nigeria dates back to 1959 and has been implemented as an integral part of the Nigerian educational system (Akande & Ndifon, 2011).

In order to ensure that guidance and counselling wear a national outlook, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) made it clear recently, that guidance and counselling services should be rendered to students in secondary schools to fulfil the Nigerian government's educational policy. As a way of implementing the policy statement, professional guidance counsellors were posted to virtually all the federal government-owned secondary schools in Nigeria.

Although the policy provision has been encouraging, the implementation of the same has been so challenging. For instance, it has been alleged that most secondary schools in some parts of the country, including Ondo state, do not have trained guidance counsellors, while a few schools just have para-professional counsellors who are teachers or head teachers appointed by the principal or school to take up the roles of guidance counsellors in the school (Akinlosotu, 2018).

A number of benefits of guidance and counselling services for school children have been identified (Adeyemo, 2014). It helps to give students solutions on how to deal with psychological problems which might affect their studies and helps them develop problem-solving skills which to an extent helps them deal with particular issues surrounding their lives. Students are guided and counselled on how to cope with different situations facing them in their school life and environment. For instance, on how to relate with their peers. It also helps to shape a student's behaviour and instil discipline in students. Students get to learn how to live in harmony with others in the school community. In so doing, they also learn to appreciate the people around them and come to harmony with their environment. It bridges the gap between the students and the school administration since they can channel their problems through the guidance and counselling office. Students get comprehensive pieces of advice on careers, courses, and jobs which enables them to have an informed choice on what to do after school (Harrigurus, 2019).

Furthermore, guidance and counselling in school settings help students to develop a healthy self-concept. This self-concept paves the way for tolerance and understanding among and between students; and for relentless self-

enhancement by individual students. As for adult students, this belief enables them to select those educational opportunities which would most appropriately meet their specialized needs and interests. Such needs and interests may range from training in vocational skills to personal concerns about students' capacity to learn (Ribadu, 2021).

Not only that, education, in the broadest sense, is aimed at helping individuals become more productive members of society. Educational guidance and school counselling service is a school-related service aimed at assisting in solving the students' problems and strengthening the studiousness efficiency of students as well. On the other hand, it is the educational guidance and school counselling process, which has been positively correlated with effective learning outcomes, better health and well-being as well as better coping strategies in times of school-related stress. Primarily, guidance and counselling services are focused on helping students to know themselves and the world around them and to make decisions for their future (Odeleye, 2017).

Moreover, the need for appropriate implementation of counselling services at all levels of education is very essential; this is well attested to by the academic performance of students suggesting counsellors' incompetency in the discharge of their duty. The resultant effect is not farfetched; secondary school students, due to ignorance, wrong information, the influence of peers, mass and social media and lack of guidance, have fallen into the danger of drug use and abuse, violence, robbery, unguided sexual activities, and school dropout (Muraina & Oderinde, 2014).

Again, Guidance counselling increases students' communication and interactive abilities; better self-acceptance and self-esteem on the part of the student; improves the ability to change students' self-defeating behaviours and habits. Better expressions and management of sentiments during stress, such as anger as well as relieves from depression, anxiety or other mental/psychological health conditions (Si, *et al*/2014).

Because of the immense benefits, the State Ministry of Education has ensured that each public school has a teacher-counsellor appointed by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC). Again, adolescents are helped to develop social skills in getting along personalities or social maladjustment (Ogbodo, 2014). This plausible act was truncated on account of a high level of nepotism, corruption and indiscipline in public secondary schools in the Owo local government area (Muraina & Oderinde, 2014).

In another context, Hum (1985) in Jepkoech-Ruttoh (2015) identified factors that affect guidance counselling services in schools. examples of such as;

age, country educational policies and culture, education, and the country or society itself. Understanding the gender roles in the community can help you to better understand the situation of the students a counsellor counsels, and thus improve counselling interactions. Again, Hum (1985) in Jepkoech-Ruttoh (2015) further identifies problems in explicatory responsibilities, the inadequacy of time, trained *counsellors* in secondary schools resulting in over-laboured few teachers and lack of support, problems of professional relationships and relationships with parents among others.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of guidance counselling has been established by Awuoret *al*, (2018) at a correlation coefficient of $r=0.503$ between guidance and counselling and the supervision/controlling of student behaviour, attitude and

value. Owoni (2015) asserts that having close interaction and creating good interpersonal relationships with students in counselling improves greater gain in socio-metric status significantly. This study, therefore, concentrates on assessing the benefits and factors of guidance and counselling services that affect the effectiveness and hypotheses of the relationship between gender and guidance counselling and the relationship between guidance counselling and academic performance in Owo secondary schools.

Gender of secondary school students and attitude towards school guidance and counselling services provided:

Relationship between guidance and counselling services and academic achievement.

Gender is the array of social characteristics or attributes and chances concerning femaleness and maleness and set apart between them. Depending on the circumstance one is akin to, gender involves sex-based social structures and gender identity (Gender Issues and Advancement of Women 2000: Abayomi, 2015). Abayomi (2015), states that these attributes are socially constructed and are acquired in the course of socialization. which could be context /time specific which inform an attitude and expectations in terms of color, religion, toys, clothings, etc, that enable them to exhibit their gender identity. Gender of secondary school student attitude towards guidance counselling is considered as a particular sex. For instance, Tadese, Yeshaneh, and Mulu (2022) affirmed that, females have developed attitudes to strong areas in a particular field of study-guidance counselling. Such attitude includes but is not limited to: levelheadedness, inquisitiveness, total dislike of misconceptions, and impartiality. Other attitudes opined by Bhaskara (1989) are, but not limited to: open/critical mindedness, respect for evidence, suspended judgment, intellectual honesty, willingness to change opinion, search for truth, interest and rational thinking. These pinpoint to some reasons why culturally some fields of study are meant for a particular sex.

The components presented here are as demonstrated by international literature and are used as a benchmark for which effective guidance and counselling services in Nigeria could be assessed by studying the educational, guidance and counselling policy and mission statements, services planning, needs assessment services, responsive services, etc (Akinlosotu, 2018).

The **core problem** is that guidance and counselling services have become one important component in school healthcare curricula. The wide range of behavioural problems exhibited by students in schools has amplified its importance. However, one of the greatest challenges facing guidance and counselling services is the lack of empirical research on career development and the lack of implementation of sound guidance counselling policies. Again, Wambui (2015) and Ribadu (2021) found that few students sought counselling services in secondary schools.

In Nigeria, reports from all levels of education point out that students have bad manners, contempt for authority, and disrespect for older people. It is also not uncommon to hear parents, teachers and church leaders blaming each other, for failing to teach young people to be well-behaved as a result of inadequate guidance counselling services (Adeyemo, 2014).

In addition, the need for guidance and counselling services in Nigeria has been made more urgent by the greatly expanded and diversified educational facilities and opportunities at the country's secondary schools. Yet these guidance

counselling facilities are dearth. At the same time, the majority of students in Nigerian secondary schools are in the transition period from puberty to adolescence (11-19 year olds). This period is characterized by physical and social changes as well as mental and psychological developments. Students in this period tend to develop adventurous spirits to do the forbidden in the context of society, such as defying authority, challenging authority, smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, and engaging in inappropriate sexual activities (Owino, 2015). Meaning these school children desperately needs counselling services to be guided to make informed decisions.

Despite the aforementioned vices and the need, there are no known definite guidance counselling services provided in a good number of public schools nationwide as earlier stated. Consequently, guidance counselling programmes are not conducted in most schools in the federation, which results in various problems that negatively affect the lives of students. Some of these problems are, but not limited to: inadequate time for studies set aside by students, uncooperative students and lack of parental support. Others are: a shortage of qualified personnel, inadequate finance, inadequate guidance and counselling sundry resources. Still, others are: negative attitudes towards guidance and counselling from students and head teachers.

As a result of these shortcomings, Akat and Peker, (2022) study revealed that, *students' interpersonal, study, vocational and problem-solving skills* as well as the development of students' potential are poor, which inadvertently resulted in ineffective study planning habits and poor academic *competencies, social and general well-being as well as health promotion* (Akat & Peker, 2022). Very significantly, inadequate counselling services have increased suicidal ideations, attempts, and outright suicide rates among students in secondary school. If this trend continues, more and more public secondary school students will be victims of this societal ills, poor school attendance- (increase absenteeism), more academic failures/ increase school dropouts, which will inadvertently impact society, given their youths, who are at the prime of their productive years were wasted. With the current trends in technological development and globalization, it has become imperative to re-focus counselling and widen its scope to meet up with the challenges of modern society, especially in Nigerian secondary schools.

Thus, this article intends to assess guidance and counselling services and their benefits, in order to ascertain factors that hinder effective guidance and counselling programme implementation in secondary schools in Owo local government, Ondo state.

Broad objective

The main objective of this study is to assess and state the benefits/factors that hinder services, and to ascertain the relationships between the gender of students and their attitude towards as well as whether or not there will be a significant relationship between the effectiveness of school guidance/ counselling services with students' performance in secondary schools in Owo local government, Ondo State

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between the gender of students and their attitude towards school guidance and counselling services provided to them in Owo local government, Ondo State.
2. There is no significant relationship between the effectiveness of school guidance and counselling services and students' performance in secondary schools in Owo local government, Ondo State.

Significantly, the outcome of this study will benefit school counsellors, students, researchers, policymakers and administrators by making relevant information available about guidance and counselling programmes. It will help school counsellors with information and criteria with which to evaluate their guidance and counselling services and may enable them to improve their service delivery thereby maximally benefiting the students.

Empirically a number of studies have been conducted in line with the objectives and hypotheses under review.

Assessment of guidance and counselling services provided in secondary schools

Amede and Ihuoma (2018) and Ihuoma (2018) conducted a study on evaluation guidance and counselling services in Eti-Osa Local Government Area of Lagos State, using: four (4) research objectives in a descriptive survey design, all counsellors in the schools under review as population. The study utilizes a purposive random sampling technique to select a sample size of 30 Counsellors in Secondary Schools, instrument was a questionnaire guidance and counselling services evaluation inventory (GCSEI) and the data obtained was gathered and analysed with the mean and descriptive statistics. The study identified the following: the aims of guidance and counselling services achieved are not yet tenable, with enormous challenges in implementation, (inadequate personnel and students' unawareness), thus, solutions were proffered. Amongst several others, more personnel should be recruited and students be intimated of guidance and counselling services in Eti-Osa Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Another study was conducted on the assessment of guidance and counselling services in the Senior senior secondary schools in the Upper Denkyira East Municipality by Owusu *et al.* (2018). The authors used a descriptive survey design quantitative approach to achieve the broad aim of the study. The authors adopted a multistage sampling technique, where a sample size of 474 was used. There were one hundred and thirty-three (133) staff (teachers, counsellors and headmasters) and three hundred and forty-one (341) students. Data were obtained with a questionnaire as the instrument and descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages, means and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (independent t-test and MANOVA) were used for data analysis. The results indicated the following: respondents have a positive perception of guidance services provided in Senior secondary schools under review and also established the lack of services and ineffective implementation and made policy recommendations.

In Africa, according to the study conducted by Alemu (2013), it was reported that most secondary schools in the region had poor awareness about the presence of counselling services. Similarly, Wambui (2015) found that few students sought counselling services in secondary schools in Kiambu County of Kenya.

Benefits of guidance and counselling services to secondary school students

A study was conducted by Modo and Sanni (2013) on guidance and counselling services as coping measures for the academic achievement of students in secondary schools in Nigeria. The purpose of the research was to determine the influence of counselling services on students' academic achievement. The researchers adopted the ex-post facto design of the study. The target population was 2,250 senior secondary schools. Stratified random sampling was used to select the actual population, with 252 forming respondents. The outcome of the study found a significant relationship between guidance and counselling services and academic performance in Nigerian secondary schools (Modo & Sanni, 2013).

In addition, Adeyemo (2014) identified increased student performance as one of the benefits of school guidance and counselling services. It helps to give students solutions on how to deal with psychological problems which might affect their studies and helps them develop problem-solving skills which to an extent aids them to deal with particular issues surrounding their lives. Students get comprehensive pieces of advice on careers, courses, and jobs which enables them to have an informed choice on what to do after school, and this promotes overall improved academic achievement (Harrigurus, 2019).

Not only that, Oye *et al* (2012) and Oyieyo (2012) in their separate studies asserted that the function of guidance and counselling personnel in secondary schools is enormous. According to the studies, school counsellors liaise with the school principal on the best way to provide counselling services for students; coordinate the counselling activities in school; provide information to students on career choice; keep vital records of students in school; assist the students on how to relate with their peers and others outside the school premises; relate with the parents of the students on how to solve the problems facing the students; serving as a role model to students, and provide adequate data for student placement.

Besides, in a survey conducted in Eldoret Municipality in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya by Owino, (2015), a series of studies were made to evaluate the value of counselling. The experimental group received extensive Guidance and Counselling, and it was found that they had better academic records, made more realistic vocational choices and were less dissatisfied with their high school experience, as well as made more progress in their employment. It was also discovered that students who participated in self-improvement activities, had a more favourable attitude towards counselling and were more satisfied with their lives compared to subjects who did not receive any counselling assistance.

Factors that affect effective guidance and counselling services in secondary schools

Studies have been conducted to ascertain factors that affect guidance and counselling services. For instance, Anagbogu (2013) studied the challenges hampering the implementation of guidance services in secondary schools and student learning outcomes. The researchers employed a descriptive survey design for the study; the random sampling technique was used to select the population for the study. Specifically, counsellors formed the respondents of the study. A research instrument was designed to collect data from the respondents. The outcome of their findings showed a negative

relationship between guidance programs and learning outcomes. The authors admitted that the findings were a result of poor facilities and equipment used for the study. Therefore, it was recommended that more studies should be conducted to know whether or not similar findings would be found or not (Anagbogu, 2013).

Another study by Anyanwu (2015) stated that most school principals, teachers and parents have a false impression about the role of school counsellors. As mentioned earlier, these people believe that schools can function well without school counsellors. Some teachers see the guidance counsellors posted to their schools as their rivals or threat and devise means of disengaging or discrediting their services by giving a false impression that the schools do not have enough facilities, such as; a conducive counselling office, inadequate funds, and tape records, to accommodate counselling work. Concerning parents' attitudes to guidance counsellors, some of them prefer sending their children to the principal due to poor performance and bad attitude rather than the school guidance counsellor (Anyanwu, 2015).

Not too long, a study by Modo and George (2013) stated that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) constitute one of the greatest challenges that school counsellors are facing in the counselling practice. The authors further stress that only 40% of counsellors are computer literate as compared to their counterparts in other parts of the world. The researchers in their intuitive knowledge also point out that the use of ICT such as; the internet, intranet, Facebook, and Twitter, among others, play important role in information sharing and communication between counsellors and students in the learning process. The use of computerized devices, such as projectors and PowerPoint presentations, facilitates a wide range of teaching and learning and for research purposes by counsellors. Similarly, Amos and Obi (2012) assessed guidance and counselling in Nigerian secondary schools and the role of information, communication and technology (ICT). The study adopted secondary sources to review the role of ICT in guidance and counselling in secondary schools. The study noted that ICT played a significant role in guidance and counselling services in three ways; as a tool, as an alternative, or as an agent of change.

Furthermore, Anagbogu (2013) investigated professional challenges to counselling practice in primary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to collect data for analysis. Four hundred and forty-one (441) questionnaires were distributed to the population of the study, and four hundred and fifteen (415) were returned. T-test was used for data analysis and findings revealed that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of counsellors in schools and desk officers in the office on the professional challenges to counselling practice.

Again, Chireshe (2012) opined that multi-facet challenges are facing the operation of guidance and counselling services in the school system, some challenges are: lack of counselling equipment, recruitment of unqualified counsellors, unavailability of students' information, parental factor, financial constraint, unfavorable school policy, etc. These challenges are well known at all levels of education (primary, secondary and tertiary) in Nigeria. Proffering solutions to the challenges facing guidance and counselling services in the school system would stem from the dilapidated state of the services in the school. The solutions to the challenges are not far-fetched, counselling, equipment, recruiting competent and qualified counsellors, and constant access to students' information as well as a good counselling policy are needed to make the services effective in the school system (Chireshe, 2012).

Another study has identified four major challenges of counselling in secondary school in the following; internal, external,

systems and personal challenges. According to the author, internal challenges are concerned with teachers' attitudes towards counselling and students' willingness to seek counselling. On the other hand, external challenges involve issues outside the school which include culture and globalization; while system challenges are things within the programme which include law establishing its practice in schools, referral procedure and resource planning while, personal challenges also comprise skills and techniques of the counsellor in areas such as; training, supervision and attitude towards the school system (Anyanwu, 2015).

Effectiveness of school guidance and counselling services and students' performance in secondary schools

A number of studies have been conducted in this regard. For instance, a study attempted to make an inquiry into the effectiveness of counselling services provided at the Student Counselling Bureau, University of Minnesota. The findings were that: the counselled students were rated significantly higher on the adjustment scale, and the counselled students earned significantly better grades than the non-counselled students. Twenty-five years later, another similar study compared the same two groups, that is, those who had been counselled and those who had not. The differences between the two groups were slight, but the counselled group reported higher incomes and made a greater contribution to society. An inquiry in the USA into the effect of programmes given in classroom guidance showed that a comprehensive curriculum about career, academic and social/personal development could positively impact student knowledge in each of those domains (Owino, 2015).

Furthermore, another study conducted by Anyanwu (2015) assessed the effectiveness of school counselling services in secondary schools in Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. The study showed that a positive relationship exists between the effectiveness of school counselling services and students' performance. The result of the findings supports the views of the existing literature which says that school counsellors perform three important roles as follows; remedial or rehabilitation role (helping students who are presently experiencing difficulties in learning); preventive role (anticipating, circumventing and preventing difficulties which may arise in the future); educating and developmental role of helping students to plan and developing their potentials. The study found the average age of students to be 17 years. This age group is basically referred to as adolescents or young adults (Anyanwu, 2015). The United Nations (UN) considers adolescents as persons aged between 15 and 24 years, whereas, the World Health Organization (WHO) considers them as persons between 10-20 years (WHO, 2016).

Anyanwu's (2015) same study also evaluated the effectiveness of school counselling services in secondary schools and revealed that both students and teachers perceived the role of school counselling services as helpful and supportive. Although, the study also noted that both students and teachers perceived counsellors' roles differently due to their understanding and mentality.

Relationship between gender of secondary school students and attitude towards school

guidance and counselling services

A descriptive survey conducted by Esuong, (2010) among 400 secondary school students in Calabar, Cross River state, Nigeria concluded that sex (gender) has a significant influence on the attitude of students towards guidance and counselling services (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). It further revealed gender differences in the students' attitudes with a mean score of 22.00 for females and the lower mean score of 19.00 for males. Again, another study conducted a few years back by Agi (2014) found that in single-sex schools, there were younger boys and girls than in mixed schools and also, older boys and girls were found in day schools than in boarding schools. These then were inferred to mean, age and type of school did not influence the issues for which guidance and counselling services were sought ($P < 0.05$). Likewise, 103 (50.5%) of the students were female and 101 (49.5%) were male. Association between gender and most sought guidance and counselling services revealed a significantly higher number of female, 42 (43.8%), than male, 23 (23.5%), students had sought the services. Gender, therefore, influenced the ability of the students to seek Guidance and Counselling services. These indicate that gender had a significant influence on a student's willingness to seek Guidance and Counselling services. More female than male students had sought Guidance and Counselling services. Both the female and male students were more confident to approach the teachers on issues that were of educational nature. The Chi-Square computation further confirmed that gender did not have an influence on issues for which Guidance and Counselling services were sought (Owino, 2015).

These imply that female students are more favourably disposed to school guidance and counselling services than their male counterparts. This finding reflects feminism, which shows that naturally female students are good in interpersonal relationships, self-disclosure and openness than male students who are usually more rigid and reserved in their relationships, hence cannot interact often with the guidance counsellors nor seek their services.

On the other hand, Agi (2014) evaluated students' perception of school counselling and their attitudes towards its programmes in Rivers State Nigeria. Results showed that a significant relationship exists between perception and attitudes to school counselling. While there was a generally low perception which reflected on attitudes, all the variables in the study except sex were found to be significant factors that influence perception as well as attitudes towards counselling

Relationship between guidance counselling services; and academic achievement

Again, empirical studies have been conducted on the relationship between guidance and counselling services and academic achievement in school. For instance, a study was carried out among principals in secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria by Suleiman (2021). Non-probability sampling techniques (stratified, purposive and convenience) were employed to select 20 principals to participate in the study. The findings of the study revealed that principals believe the provision of counselling services had a significant impact on students' academic achievement, even though most of the secondary schools do not have a good counselling unit, qualified counsellors, and counselling facilities. The study recommended that a well-equipped counselling unit should be available in schools. Only certified counsellors should be deployed to offer counselling services to students. Lastly, students should be sensitized and encouraged by the school on

the need for them to go for counselling to solve their numerous challenges (Bosede, 2021; UNESCO 2018).

Theoretical Framework

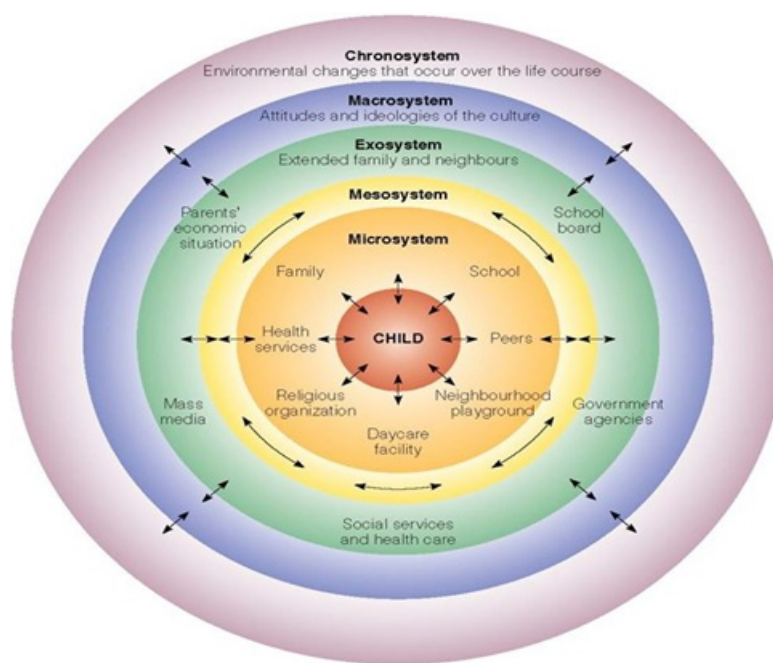


Figure 2.1. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) socio-ecological systems theory.

Description of the theory

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) socio-ecological systems theory posits that human development is shaped through an interaction between the individual and their environment. According to the systems perspective, individuals influence and are influenced by the systems in their environment. Student and school problems are a function of the pattern of interaction between the individual and their environment. Subsequently, in order to eliminate problems that block students from flourishing, those problems must be addressed on many levels and in the context of a system that includes not only the student and the school but also the student's environment (family and community).

This study intended to assess how schools work within and between multiple systems at different levels, including the student, school and community. Since students influence and are impacted by the systems to which they belong, a useful strategy for working with students and their families is to adopt a broader or holistic perspective. Families and schools are interconnected systems, students, therefore bring to schools their family system dynamics, while trying to negotiate the complexities of the classroom and school system. Guidance and Counselling services which integrate notions underlying holistic perspectives on student development include developmental conceptualism and dynamics of systems approach.

What this entails is that guidance—counsellors and other educators (e.g. teachers, heads of schools and administrators) and parents including relevant stakeholders are encouraged to help students reach career, academic, personal, and social developmental competencies.

In light of Bronfenbrenner's system perspective on obstacles to educational achievement, school counsellors are required to make greater utilization of resources inside as well as outside the classroom. In summary, a systemic perspective appears to be an effective framework for delivering guidance and counselling in schools. The school counsellor cannot afford to solely approach problems on an isolated, individual student level but rather must operate at a higher system level working for change inside/outside the school while accessing support and resources in the greater community in order to overcome challenges to students' flourishing. School counsellors or teachers responsible for programmed implementation should design guidance and counselling programs and services that meet the needs of students at various developmental stages of human growth.

Application of the theory to the study

An academically excelling student is one who receives the benefits of his/her educational experience and achieves personal potential. Moreover, the goal of school guidance and counselling is not only to support positive healthy human development but also to help create a school environment that develops a student's right to excel by achieving personal/social goals.

The child in the theory refers to the secondary school student who has to assess guidance and counselling services.

The Microsystem is the most influential level of the ecological systems theory. This is the most immediate context in which guidance and counselling services are provided to the student. The Mesosystem focuses on the relationship between the student, her family, faith and related settings.

The Expo-system focuses on the factors that promote interpersonal relationships among the students. This includes extended family and neighbours, mass media, social services, and government, and all these factors contribute to shaping the thinking and decision-making skills of students.

The Macro system looked at ideological values, norms and institutional patterns of a particular culture. All these are embedded in the kind of ethnic background and beliefs of the student.

The Chronosystem looked at environmental changes that occur that affect the overall growth of the students.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey as was used by Owoni (2015), given it involves a group of people which is a true representation of the entire population under study.

Research setting

The study was conducted in selected secondary schools in Owo city, in Owo local government, Ondo state, because it has many secondary schools suitable for the purpose of this research. Between 1400 and 1600 AD, it was the capital of a Yoruba city-state. Owo is situated in southwestern Nigeria, at the southern edge of the Yoruba Hills, and at the intersection of roads from Akure, Kabba, Benin City, and Siluko. Owo is situated halfway between the towns of Ile Ife and Benin City. Owo has secondary schools, a Federal Polytechnic, St. John's Teacher Training College, a government trade institute, a museum, and several hospitals. The local government has a population of 222,262, based on the 2006 population census.

Target population

The target population for this study was 368, comprising of both male and female students and teachers in selected senior secondary schools in Owo local government, Ondo State, a rural settlement.

Sample size determination

The sample size was obtained by using the statistical method by Taro Yamane (Yamane, 1973).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where,

n = minimum sample size

N = Total population

e = constant (0.05)

$$n = \frac{368}{1 + 368(0.05^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{368}{1.92} = 191.6 = 192$$

Therefore, a sample of 192 was used for the study.

Sampling technique

Simple random and stratified sampling techniques were used. For the former, to select 3 secondary schools used in no particular order in the study including, Methodist High School, Amuye Secondary School, and Christ Central Group of Schools. Whereas, the latter was started by teachers, SSS3-1 in strata due to the timing. Study respondents were proportionally from each of the selected schools. This method was preferred because it gives every member of the

population an equal chance of being selected.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

This study included randomly (balloting) selected students and teachers regardless of sex or religion who were present in school during data collection and are bonafide students and teachers from the selected schools in Owo local government, Ondo State. Whereas, those absent were excluded, whether or not they are bonafide.

Instrument for data collection

In this study, the instrument for data collection was a self-structured closed-end questionnaire. The compilation was done through literature reviews and consultation with experts and the supervisor.

The instrument was divided into six sections:

- Section A comprised of items on socio-demographic information of respondents.
- Section B made up of items to assess guidance and counselling services provided in respondents' schools.
- Section C made up of items to identify the benefits of guidance and counselling services to respondents.
- Section D made up of items to identify the factors hindering effective guidance and counselling services in respondents' schools.
- Section E made up of items to assess the gender of respondents and their attitude towards guidance and counselling services provided to them.
- Section F made up of items to assess the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services and respondents' performance in secondary schools.

Validity of the instrument

In this study, face and content validity was established. Face validity was done by applying a superficial assessment of the instrument to ensure it measures what it is supposed to measure while content validity was done by giving the instrument to experts and asked to provide feedback on how well each question measures the construct. It served as an avenue for the easy development of relevant questions and the removal of irrelevant ones. The instrument was based on the study objectives and the researcher gave the developed tool to the supervisor for modification of items, assessment and approval of the instrument.

Reliability of the instrument

After corrections and modifications suggested by the experts and the project supervisor were effected, a trial test of the items was made to establish the reliability of the instrument and also to identify any problem(s) that may be encountered while administering the questionnaire during data collection. A pilot study was carried out with students with similar backgrounds. The instrument was administered to 20 students representing 10% of the sample and repeated after a two-

week interval but was not included in the final data. The scores obtained were compared to determine the consistency and reliability of the instrument using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

Method of data collection

Prior to data collection, initial visits were made to each school by the researcher with an introductory letter from the Ag Dean, Faculty of nursing sciences. These visits provided a forum for the introduction and establishment of rapport between the researcher, the principals and the teachers. These visits also provided the opportunity for making all necessary arrangements for data collection. Arrangements to be made include: the allocation of data collecting day in each school and an agreeable regular weekly visit to each school for the purpose of administering the questionnaire. The researcher administered the questionnaire directly to respondents, and the same was retrieved immediately from the respondents after completion.

Method of data analysis

To carry out data analysis for this study, Chi-Square statistics were used for inferential statistics. Data were entered into SPSS version 23 and analyzed into frequency, simple percentages and mean. Hypotheses for this study were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

Ethical consideration

Written permission was gotten from the supervisor. The researcher obtained informed consent from the respondents. Respondents were kept anonymous and confidential throughout the study. No personal detail appeared on the questionnaire. Only the researcher, supervisor and statistician had access to the information and data obtained for the purpose of this study. Participation was entirely voluntary, were informed that they were free to decline to participate at any time without suffering any negative consequences. Respondents were given adequate information about the study and no part of the research process was expected to pose a source of physical or emotional harm to respondents.

Data analysis and presentation of findings

This is based on data analysis and presentation of results. Frequency counts, percentages, mean, and test of hypothesis were done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Data for the study was collected using a structured questionnaire. A total of one hundred and ninety-two (192) questionnaires were issued, completed, and retrieved from respondents for the data analysis. The presentation is done in line with the socio-demography, research objectives and hypotheses.

SECTION A. Socio-demographic data

| Table 4.1. Socio-demographic information of respondents | | | |
|---|--------------------|------------|----------------|
| VARIABLE | RESPONSE OPTION | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE (%) |
| Age | 13-16 | 54 | 28.1 |
| | 17-20 | 88 | 45.8 |
| | 21-25 | 30 | 15.6 |
| | 26 years and above | 20 | 10.4 |
| | Total | 192 | 100.0 |
| Gender | Male | 92 | 47.9 |
| | Female | 100 | 52.1 |
| | Total | 192 | 100.0 |
| Class | SSS1 | 48 | 25.0 |
| | SSS2 | 76 | 39.6 |
| | SSS3 | 68 | 35.4 |
| | Total | 192 | 100.0 |
| Religion | Christianity | 102 | 53.1 |
| | Islam | 90 | 46.9 |
| | Total | 192 | 100.0 |
| Ethnicity | Yoruba | 114 | 59.4 |
| | Igbo | 65 | 33.9 |
| | Hausa | 13 | 6.8 |
| | Total | 192 | 100.0 |
| Parent's marital status | Married | 142 | 74.0 |
| | Divorced | 22 | 11.5 |
| | Single parent | 28 | 14.6 |
| | Total | 192 | 100.0 |
| Family structure | Monogamous | 112 | 58.3 |
| | Polygamous | 80 | 41.7 |
| | Total | 192 | 100.0 |

The socio-demographic data of respondents as presented in Table 4.1 above showed that for age, 54(28.1%) of the

respondents were 13-16years old, 88(45.8%) were 17-20 years, and 30(15.6%) were 21-25 years. For gender, 92(47.9%) were males while 100 (52.1%) were females. For class, 48(25.0%) of the respondents were in SSS1, 76(39.6%) were in SSS2, and 68(35.4%) were in SSS3. On religion, 102(53.1%) of the respondents were Christians while 92(46.9%) were Muslims. On ethnicity, 114(59.4%) were Yoruba, 65(33.9%) were Igbo, and 13(6.8%) were Hausa. As regards parent's marital status, 142(74.0%) were married, 22(11.5%) were divorced, and 28(14.6%) were single parents. Finally, as regards family structure, 112(58.3%) were from monogamous families, while 80(41.7%) were from polygamous families.



Figure 4.1. Respondents' gender

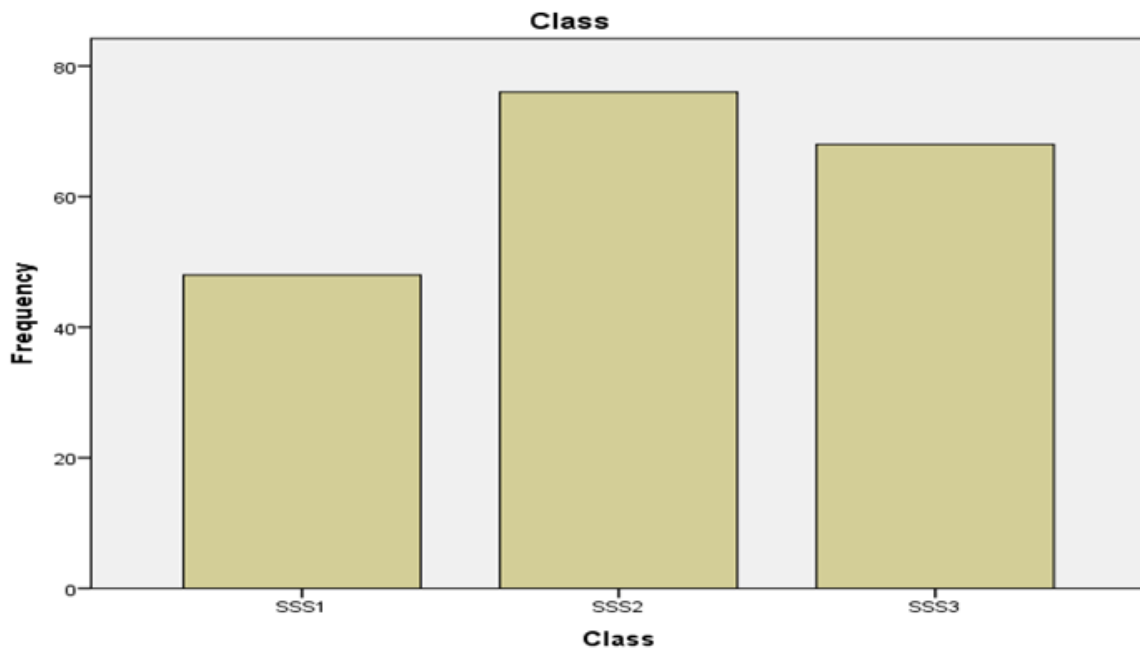


Figure 4.2. Respondents' class

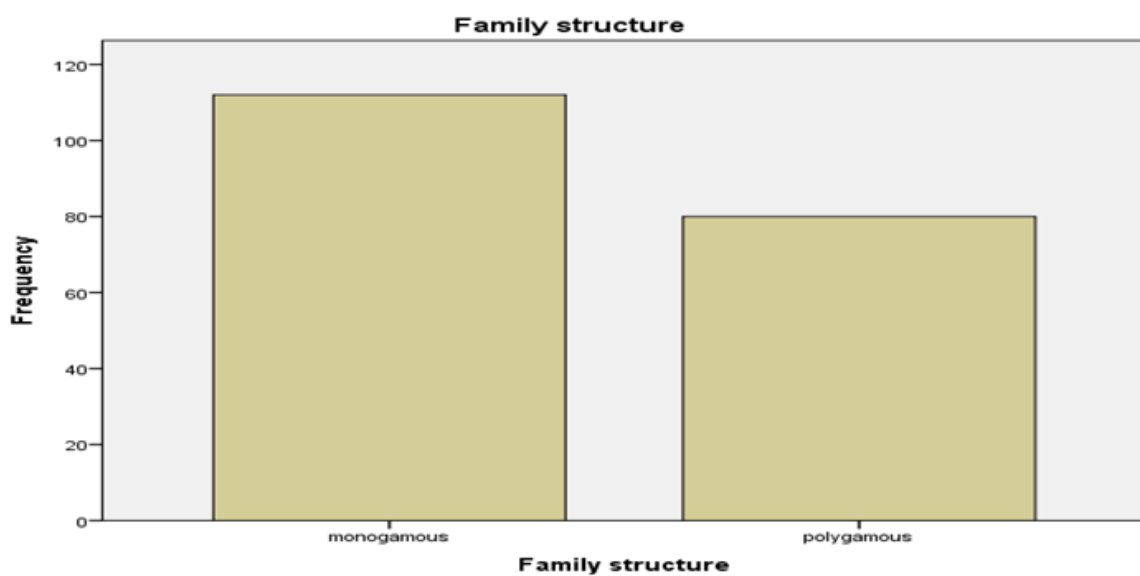


Figure 4.3. Respondents' family structure.

SECTION B. Questionnaire response

Research objective 1: Assess the guidance and counselling services provided in secondary schools

Table 4.2. Guidance and counselling services provided in secondary schools

| QUESTIONS | YES (%) | NO (%) |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| My school has a guidance counsellor | 89 (46.4%) | 103 (53.6%) |
| Guidance and counselling is included in the school daily routine timetable | 76 (39.6%) | 116 (60.4%) |
| My school guidance counsellors have good interpersonal relationships | 110 (57.3%) | 82 (42.7%) |
| Students are aware of and regularly visit the guidance counsellor's office | 90 (46.9%) | 102 (53.1%) |
| My school guidance counsellors exhibit high sense of professionalism in the discharge of their duties | 86 (38.5%) | 106 (61.5%) |
| There is an adequate consultation room where students are supposed to go and discuss their problems with the counsellor | 74 (44.8%) | 118 (55.2%) |
| The school counsellors office is not private enough for free discussion | 114 (59.4%) | 78 (40.6%) |
| The amount of time allotted for guidance and counselling in my school is sufficient | 72 (37.5%) | 120 (62.5%) |
| There is a notice board where information and materials are placed | 122 (63.5%) | 70 (36.5%) |
| There is a career library where students can search for information | 89 (46.4%) | 103 (53.6%) |

Analysis on table 4.2 revealed that for “My school has a guidance counsellor”, 89 (46.4%) of the respondents chose yes, whereas, 103 (53.6%) chose no. As regards “Guidance and counselling is included in the school daily routine timetable”, 76 (39.6%) chose yes, whereas 116 (60.4%) chose no. For “Students are aware of and regularly visit the guidance counsellor’s office”, 90 (46.9%) said yes while 102 (53.1%) said no. On “The school counsellor’s office is not private enough for free discussion” 114 (59.4%) of the respondents said yes and 78 (40.6%) said no. As regards “The amount of time allotted for guidance and counselling in my school is sufficient”, 72 (37.5%) of the respondents chose yes and 120 (62.5%) chose no. For “There is a notice board where information and materials are placed”, 122 (63.5%) of the respondents said yes while 70 (36.5%) said no. For “There is a career library where students can search for information”, 89 (46.4%) of the respondents said yes while 103 (53.6%) chose no.

SECTION C. Research objective 2: Identify the benefits of guidance and counselling services to secondary school students

Table 4.3. Benefits of guidance and counselling services to secondary school students

| Statement | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Increased academic achievement | 143 (74.5%) | 44 (22.9%) | 5 (2.6%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| Increased school attendance | 21 (10.9%) | 22 (11.5%) | 101 (52.6%) | 48 (25.0%) |
| Positive attitude towards school | 15 (7.8%) | 32 (16.7%) | 96 (50.0%) | 49 (25.5%) |
| It promotes students' self-esteem | 87 (45.3%) | 59 (30.7%) | 34 (17.7%) | 12 (6.3%) |
| Improved decision-making skills | 137 (71.4%) | 45 (23.4%) | 10 (5.2%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| Students develop good interpersonal and social skills | 80 (41.7%) | 112 (58.3%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| It helps students to participate in self-improvement activities | 152 (79.2%) | 40 (20.8%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| Counsellors serve as role models to students | 56 (29.2%) | 62 (32.3%) | 46 (24.0%) | 28 (14.6%) |
| Improved academic performance of students | 134 (69.8%) | 58 (30.3%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) |

As presented in Table 4.3, out of 192 respondents, 143 (74.5%) said strongly agree with “Increased academic achievement”, 44 (22.9%) said agree, and 5 (2.6%) said disagree. On “Increased school attendance”, 21 (10.9%) chose strongly agree, 22 (11.5%) chose agree, 101 (52.6%) chose disagree and 48 (25.0%) chose strongly disagree. As regards “Improved decision-making skills, 137 (71.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 45 (23.4%) agreed, and 10 (5.2%) disagreed. As regards “Students develop good interpersonal and social skills”, 80 (41.7%) of the respondents chose strongly agree, and 112 (58.3%) chose agree. On “Counsellors serve as role models to students”, 56 (29.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 62 (32.3%) agreed, 46 (24.0%) disagreed and 28 (14.6%) strongly disagreed. For “Improved

academic performance of students”, 134 (69.8%) of the respondents chose strongly agree, and 58 (30.3%) chose agree.

SECTION D. Research objective 3: Identify the factors hindering effective guidance and counselling services in secondary schools

Table 4.4. Factors hindering effective guidance and counselling services in secondary schools.

| Variables | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|
| The counsellor's office is not conducive to free discussions | 99 (51.6%) | 53 (27.6%) | 25 (13.0%) | 15 (7.8%) |
| Parents prefer teachers to counsellors in handling their children | 61 (31.8%) | 76 (39.6%) | 41 (21.4%) | 14 (7.3%) |
| The teachers resent the presence of the guidance counsellors in my school | 0 (0.0%) | 44 (22.9%) | 5 (2.6%) | 143 (74.5%) |
| Inadequate fund | 82 (42.7%) | 85 (44.3%) | 23 (12.0%) | 2 (1.0%) |
| Lack of counselling materials | 70 (36.5%) | 46 (24.0) | 48 (25.0%) | 28 (14.6%) |
| Recruitment of unqualified counsellors | 87 (45.3%) | 59 (30.7%) | 34 (17.7%) | 12 (6.3%) |
| Unfavourable school policy | 65 (3.9%) | 55 (27.6%) | 44 (22.9%) | 28 (14.6%) |
| Lack of good ICT equipment | 56 (29.2%) | 62 (32.3%) | 46 (24.0%) | 28 (14.6%) |

Table 4.4 showed the factors hindering effective guidance and counselling services in secondary schools. For “The counsellor’s office is not conducive for free discussions”, 99 (51.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 131(45.2%)

agreed, 25 (13.0%) disagreed and 15 (7.8%) strongly disagreed. On “Parents prefer teachers to counsellors in handling their children”, 61 (31.8%) of the respondents said strongly agree, 76 (39.6%) said agree, 41 (21.4%) said disagree and 14 (7.3%) said strongly disagree. As regards “Inadequate fund”, 82 (42.7%) of the respondents chose strongly agree, 85 (44.3%) chose agree, 23 (12.0%) chose disagree and 2 (1.0%) chose strongly disagree. On “Recruitment of unqualified counsellors”, 87 (45.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 59 (30.7%) agreed, 34 (17.7%) disagreed and 12 (6.3%) strongly disagreed. Finally, for “Lack of good ICT equipment” 56 (29.2%) of the respondents said strongly agree, 62 (32.3%) said agree, 46 (24.0%) said disagree, and 28 (14.6%) strongly disagreed.

SECTION E. Test of hypotheses

Hypothesis one

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the gender of students and their attitude towards school guidance and counselling services provided to them in Owo local government, Ondo State. Pearson Chi-Square is used to test the hypothesis. A summary of the analysis is presented in Table 4.6. Table 4.5 shows the cross-tabulation of respondents' gender and their attitude towards school guidance and counselling services provided to them. The table showed that out of 192 respondents, 132 (68.8%) had a positive attitude while 60 (31.4%) had a negative attitude.

Table 4.5. Gender * Attitude towards Guidance and Counselling Services Cross tabulation

| | | Attitude towards Guidance and Counselling Services | | Total |
|--------|--------|--|---------------|-----------------|
| | | Positive | Negative | |
| Gender | Male | 54 (28.1%) | 38 (19.8%) | 92 (47.9%) |
| | Female | 78 (40.6%) | 22 (11.5%) | 100 (52.1%) |
| Total | | 132 (68.8%) | 60 (31.4%) | 192 (100.0%) |

Table 4.6. Chi-square test of the association between gender of students and their attitude towards school guidance and counselling services provided to them

| Statistics | Df | X ² Cal | X ² Crit. | p-value |
|--------------------|----|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 1 | 8.32 | 3.84 | .010 |

*Significant at $p < 0.05$, ($\chi^2_{\text{Cal}} = 8.32 > \chi^2_{\text{Crit.}} = 3.84$, at $df = 1$, $p < 0.05$)

The result of the Pearson Chi-Square test in Table 4.6 showed that the calculated Chi-square of 8.32 is greater than the critical value of 3.84 at a 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, because the calculated value is greater than the critical value, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant relationship between the gender of students and their attitude towards school guidance and counselling services provided to them is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between the gender of students and their attitude towards school guidance and counselling services provided to them. This result is consistent with a previous study which asserted that despite sex differences, the attitude of males and females to some extent are favourable towards counselling services (Esuong, 2010).

Hypothesis two

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between the effectiveness of school guidance and counselling services and students' performance in secondary education in Owo local government, Ondo State. Pearson Chi-square is used to test the hypothesis. A summary of the analysis is presented in Table 4.8. Table 4.7 shows a cross-tabulation of the effectiveness of school guidance and counselling services and students' performance in secondary schools. The table showed that out of 192 respondents, 115 (59.9%) had good performance, while 77 (40.1%) had poor performance in secondary schools.

Table 4.7. Effectiveness of School Guidance and Counselling Services * Students' Performance Cross tabulation

| | | Students' Performance | | Total |
|---|-----|-----------------------|---------|----------|
| | | Good | Poor | |
| Effective Guidance and Counselling Services help students develop problem-solving skills and improve their overall academic performance | Yes | 115 | 50 | 165 |
| | | (59.9%) | (26.0%) | (85.9%) |
| | No | 0 | 27 | 27 |
| | | (0.0%) | (14.1%) | (14.1%) |
| Total | | 115 | 77 | 192 |
| | | (59.9%) | (40.1%) | (100.0%) |

Table 4.8. Chi-square test of the association between the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services and students' performance

| Statistics | Df | χ^2_{Cal} | $\chi^2_{\text{Crit.}}$ | p-value |
|--------------------|----|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 1 | 47.12 | 3.84 | .000 |

**Significant at $p < 0.05$, ($\chi^2_{Cal} = 47.12$ > $\chi^2_{Crit.} = 3.84$, at $df\ 1$, $p < 0.05$)*

The result of the Pearson Chi-Square test in Table 4.8 showed that the calculated Chi-square of 47.12 is greater than the critical value of 3.84 at a 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, because the calculated value is greater than the critical value, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant relationship between the effectiveness of school guidance and counselling services and students' performance in secondary schools is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services and students' performance in secondary schools.

Discussion of Findings

The chapter focuses on the discussion of major findings, summary, conclusion, implication of the study to nursing, and recommendations.

Socio-demographic information of the respondents

A total of 192 respondents were used for this study. Predominantly, the study had more respondents (88 (45.8%)) between the age of 17-20 years. This is in agreement with the findings of Anyanwu (2015) whose study found the average age of the students to be 17 years. This age group is basically referred to as adolescents or young adults. The majority, 100 (52.1%), of the respondents are females. This is similar to the findings of Agi (2014) in which the majority (50.5%) of the respondents were female. The majority of the respondents, 76 (39.6%) and 68 (35.4%), were from SSS 2 and SSS 3 respectively. The majority, 102 (53.1%), of the respondents were Christians and 114 (59.4%) were from the Yoruba tribe. The majority, 142 (74.0%), of the respondents' parents were married while 112 (58.3%) were from monogamous families.

Assessment of guidance and counselling services provided in secondary schools

This objective was met. The result of this study shows that 89 (46.4%) of the respondents had guidance counsellors in their schools. Also, the majority (57.3%) of the respondents had school guidance counsellors with good interpersonal relationships. 90 (46.9%) said that students were aware of and regularly visit the school guidance counsellor's office. More than half 114 (59.4%) of the respondents said that the school counsellor's office is not private enough for free discussion. Also, the majority of the respondents, 120 (62.5%), had insufficient time allocated to guidance and counselling in their schools. The majority of the respondents 122 (63.5%) had a notice board where useful information and materials are placed while 70 (36.5%) had none. This is in contrast with the findings of the study conducted by Alemu (2013), which reported that most secondary schools in the region had poor awareness about the presence of counselling services. Similarly, Wambui (2015) found that few students sought counselling services in secondary schools in Kiambu County of Kenya.

Benefits of guidance and counselling services to secondary school students

This objective was also met. The result of this study shows that 128 (66.7%) had positive benefits while 64 (33.3%) had a negative benefit from guidance and counselling services provided to them. The study identified increased academic performance, enhanced self-esteem, positive attitude towards school, increased school attendance, and improved decision-making skills as benefits of guidance and counselling services to secondary school students. This is similar to the finding of Modo & Sanni, (2013) in their cross-sectional study which revealed a significant relationship between guidance and counselling services and academic performance in Nigerian secondary schools.

Owino (2015), in his study also reported that with better academic records, students made more realistic vocational choices, were less dissatisfied with their high school experience, made more progress in their employment, participated in self-improvement activities, had a more favourable attitude towards counselling were all benefits of guidance and counselling services.

Anyanwu, (2015) in his study conducted in Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria, also reported the role of school counselling services as helpful and supportive. However, in another study by Anagbogu (2013), the outcome of their findings showed a negative relationship between guidance programs and learning outcomes.

Factors hindering effective guidance and counselling services in secondary schools

Like others, this objective was achieved. Results of this study identified inadequate funds, lack of counselling materials and resources, lack of good ICT equipment, unconducive counsellor's office, unfavourable school policy, parental factors, and recruitment of unqualified school counsellors as factors hindering effective guidance and counselling services in secondary schools. This is similar to the findings of Modo and George (2013), which stated that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) constitute one of the greatest challenges that school counsellors are facing in the counselling practice. Besides this, this is similar to the findings of Suleiman *et al* (2012) in his study. The use of ICT should be encouraged in secondary education because it can be used to improve the educational programs of guidance counsellors' work as well as human capacity in other fields of human endeavours such as business transactions, and industrial operations, among others (Suleiman *et al*, 2012).

Anyanwu (2015) in his study also noted that most school principals, teachers and parents have a false impression of the role of school counsellors. This is similar to the findings of Chireshe (2012) in his study in Nigeria which reported that multi-facet challenges are facing the operation of guidance and counselling services in the school system, the challenges are lack of counselling equipment, recruitment of unqualified counsellors, unavailability of students' information, parental factor, financial constraint, unfavourable school policy, etc.

Implication to Nursing Practice, nursing education and nursing research

Secondary school principals, teachers, and students need to be properly educated on the benefits of guidance and

counselling services. Therefore, it is necessary for nurses to put this into consideration in organizing school outreaches. Nurses should also consider the factors hindering effective guidance and counselling services in secondary schools and ways of proffering solutions to them.

Whereas, there is a desperate need to include guidance and counselling services in its curriculum to improve nursing education. It is also important for students to be educated on the various ways to effectively make use of guidance and counselling services provided to them in school to their advantage.

With regards to nursing research, there is a need for more studies on guidance and counselling services and their associations among urban and rural populations in order to have a better understanding of the construct.

Summary

This study assessed guidance and counselling services and their benefits to secondary school students in Owo local government, Ondo state. The study sought to assess the guidance and counselling services provided in secondary schools, identify the benefits of guidance and counselling services to secondary school students, and identify the factors hindering effective guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Owo local government, Ondo State. Theoretical and empirical literature were reviewed in line with the study objectives. Socio-ecological systems theory by Bronfenbrenner was applied to the study. A descriptive design and a simple random sampling technique were used for the study. Taro Yamane's formula of population size determination was used to select 192 secondary school students for the study. Data for the analysis was collected using frequency count, percentages and bar charts respectively while Pearson Chi-Square was used to test the hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance. Ethical consideration was obtained as required.

From the analysis, the researcher found that more of the respondents benefited positively from school guidance and counselling services. Also, the researcher found that there is a significant relationship between the gender of students and their attitude towards school guidance and counselling services provided to them. The study also revealed a significant relationship between the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services and students' performance in secondary schools.

Conclusion

From the findings and data analysis, the researcher concluded that although only a few schools effectively made use of guidance and counselling service in Owo local government, Ondo State, students still benefited positively from school guidance and counselling services provided to them. The researcher also concluded that there is a significant relationship between the gender of students and their attitude towards school guidance and counselling services provided to them. The study also revealed a significant relationship between the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services and students' performance in secondary schools in Owo local government, Ondo State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study, the researcher made the following recommendations:

1. The Federal Government of Nigeria, in conjunction with the Federal Ministry of Education, should establish without delay, guidance and counselling units in all secondary schools in the nation as envisaged in the National Policy on Education. This should be made an essential part of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme.
2. Guidance counsellors in secondary schools should make use of effective guidance counselling approaches that will enable them to meet the needs of students in schools.
3. Principals, teachers, parents and the government must also be actively involved in providing their support where necessary towards the effectiveness of school guidance and counselling services.
4. Trained counsellors should be posted in schools in rural areas. This will enable them to carry out all guidance programmes effectively.
5. All necessary assistance towards the establishment and progress of a solid educational system should be given by the Federal, State and Local Governments. For example, funds should be made available for the provision of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools.

Suggestions for further study

The researcher made the following suggestions for further study:

- The current study should be conducted among adolescent girls at the state and local level in order to triangulate the findings so obtained here.
- A qualitative study should be conducted using interviews and focused group discussions to allow adolescent girls to express their opinions on the variables considered.

Conflict of Interest

Authors declare no conflict of interest.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent,

I am conducting a research on **"Assessment of Guidance and Counselling Services and Its Benefits to Secondary School Students in Owo Local Government, Ondo State"**. The questionnaire is designed to collect data for the purpose of the research, it therefore promises confidentiality. Kindly provide your most honest response to these questions.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Please kindly tick (✓) for an option or fill in the blank space as the case may be.

SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. Age: (a) 13-16 (). (b) 17-20 (). (c) 21-25(). (d) 26 years and above ().
2. Class: (a) SSS1 (). (b) SSS2 (). (c) SSS3 ().
3. Religion: (a) Christianity (). (b) Islam ().
4. Ethnicity: (a) Yoruba () (b) Igbo () (c) Hausa ()
5. Parent's marital status: (a) Married () (b) Divorced () (c) Single Parent ()

6. Family structure:(a) Monogamous () (b) Polygamous ()

SECTION B: GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES PROVIDED IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

| S/N | QUESTIONS | YES | NO |
|-----|---|-----|----|
| 7. | My school has a guidance counsellor | | |
| 8. | Guidance and counselling is included in the school daily routine timetable | | |
| 9. | My school guidance counsellors have good interpersonal relationships | | |
| 10. | Students are aware of and regularly visit the guidance counsellor's office | | |
| 11. | My school guidance counsellors exhibit high sense of professionalism in the discharge of their duties | | |
| 12. | There is an adequate consultation room where students are supposed to go and discuss their problems with the counsellor | | |
| 13. | The school counsellors office is not private enough for free discussion | | |
| 14. | The amount of time allotted for guidance and counselling in my school is sufficient | | |
| 15. | There is a notice board where information and materials are placed | | |
| 16. | There is a career library where students can search for information | | |

SECTION C: BENEFITS OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES TO SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

| S/N | VARIABLE | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
|-----|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 17. | Increased academic achievement | | | | |
| 18. | Increased school attendance | | | | |
| 19. | Positive attitude towards school | | | | |
| 20. | It promotes students' self-esteem | | | | |
| 21. | Improved decision-making skills | | | | |
| 22. | Students develop good interpersonal and social skills | | | | |
| 23. | It helps students to participate in self-improvement activities | | | | |
| 24. | Counsellors serve as role models to students | | | | |
| 25. | Improved academic performance of students | | | | |

SECTION D: FACTORS HINDERING EFFECTIVE GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

| S/N | VARIABLES | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
|-----|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 26. | The counsellor's office is not conducive to free discussions | | | | |
| 27. | Parents prefer teachers to counsellors in handling their children | | | | |
| 28. | The teachers resent the presence of the guidance counsellors in my school | | | | |
| 29. | Inadequate fund | | | | |
| 30. | Lack of counselling materials | | | | |
| 31. | Recruitment of unqualified counsellors | | | | |
| 32. | Unfavourable school policy | | | | |
| 33. | Lack of good ICT equipment | | | | |

SECTION E: GENDER OF STUDENTS AND THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS SCHOOL GUIDANCE AND

COUNSELLING SERVICES PROVIDED TO THEM

| S/N | VARIABLES | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
|-----|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 34. | Male students make more use of guidance and counselling services | | | | |
| 35. | Female students make more use of guidance and counselling services | | | | |
| 36. | Male students are more open to sharing their issues with the school counsellor | | | | |
| 37. | Female students are more open to sharing their issues with the school counsellor | | | | |

SECTION F: EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES AND STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

| S/N | VARIABLES | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
|-----|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 38. | Guidance and counselling services give room for students to improve their self-esteem | | | | |
| 39. | Counsellors can help students develop strength in their weak academic areas | | | | |
| 40. | Guidance and counselling services help students develop problem-solving skills and improve their overall academic performance | | | | |