



## IMPACT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN UDI EDUCATION ZONE

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**Abstract:** The study investigated the impact of guidance and counseling on the academic performance of secondary school students in Udi Education Zone. The study adopted survey research design. Simple random sampling technique was used in selecting 253 SS2 students from 4 intact classes in 6 randomly selected schools. Out of the 253 students used for the study, 101 are males while 152 are females. A questionnaire instrument developed by the researcher and validated by experts was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach alpha technique and its reliability index was found to be 0.88. The study was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significant level. One of the results of the finding showed that guidance and counseling has great influence on the improvement of students study habit. More so, it influences the ability of students to manage their time effectively in order to enhance their academic performance. It was recommended that State Ministries of Education and school principals should ensure that guidance and counseling units are established in schools and also guidance and counselors should apply all necessary skills and techniques during counseling sessions.

**Keywords:** Guidance, Counseling, Academic Performance.

### Introduction

Guidance and counseling are two closely interrelated concepts. According to Okita (2012), guidance refers to a broad area of all educational activities and services aimed at assisting individual students to understand themselves and adjust to school life. Therefore, it is aimed at bringing about maximum development and self-realization of human potentials for the benefit of the individual and the society.

Umoh (2004) explained counseling as an interaction between the client (counselee) and the counselor in which the counselor tries to use his/her professional training, skills, expertise and experience to help the client overcome an area of conflict which has hindered the inter and intra-personal relationships, growth and development. In other words, it is a helping relationship where a person is assisted in a face to face interaction.

Okobia and Okorodudu (2016) stated that guidance and counseling is encompassed by activities of relevant services and also processes of helping persons within and outside the school to achieve their full potentials in their emotional, moral, social, academic and vocational developments. In view of this, guidance and counseling therefore, is a profession which aims at assisting individuals to overcome challenges that are related to academics, career and life in general. It is a special kind of relationship that involves an interaction between the counselor and the client in which the counselor diagnoses the client's problem and helps in solving the problem to the best of his/her ability. As one of the educational services, guidance and counseling facilitates the implementation of educational policy, the attainment of policy goals and the promotion of effectiveness of educational system. One of the goals of educational services is to make learning experiences more meaningful for learners



thereby, helping students especially those in secondary schools to succeed in their educational pursuit.

Guidance and counseling is an important educational tool in shaping the orientation in a child from negative ideas that is planted in the child by his/her peers hence, the need for the school counselor to assist the child in moulding his/her future through counseling therapy. The school counselor is seen as a role model and highly respected by students. The counselors by their training are expected to be friends with the school child, listen to the child's complaints and shortcomings and proffer guidance to the child thereby directing the child in the right part to take in life's pursuit. The school children are undergoing some of the most difficult periods of life.

The transition from childhood to adulthood is a difficult one even for the most balanced child. Apart from the influence of the family, the other major influence on the young person's life is the school, the school environment and peers. That is why Herman (2009) stated that guidance and counseling services are designed to help individuals with psychological problems to voluntarily change their behavior and to enable them make wise future decisions, clarify their ideas, perceptions, attitudes and goals. He further stated that the primary mission of a school's guidance and counseling program is to provide a broad spectrum of personnel services to the students. Eremie and Jackson (2019) asserted that there are many services that the professional guidance and counselor renders to the students such as educational, vocational and personal-social services among others. According to them, the educational service is a service which takes care of all issues associated with education as they relate to the physical environment of the school, activities within the school, the structural make up of the school, students intake, students progress and adaptability within the school. He discussed vocational service as the process of assisting the students in choosing occupation, preparing them to enter into it and make progress. He emphasized that vocational guidance and counseling helps students to understand themselves in terms of their abilities, aptitudes and interests, providing them with broader views about the world of work, enhancing their awareness of the various options opened to them and giving them the confidence that they can make a reasonable choice from the various options available. He also described personal-social guidance as a service which helps the students to take care of their personal social problems relating to personality maladjustments which

will help them to be well adjusted, improve their self-confidence, feelings and attitudes towards others and also help students to assess and accept him/herself. In other words, personal-social guidance is an activity which the counselor uses to help students in their personal relationship with themselves and with others both in and outside the school. Denga (2011) referred to these services as cluster of formalized educational services designed by the school to assist students to achieve self-knowledge or self understanding which is necessary for them to attain the fullest self-development and self-realization of their potentials.

Egbo (2013) asserted that the total development of a child can only take place in an environment conducive for teaching and learning. It is in realization of the above that all the educational services which can promote teaching and learning in schools are given prominent attention by educational planners. Guidance and counseling services are among the school educational services due to the fact that they develop, assess and improve educational programs, enhance teaching and improve the competence of the teacher. Braddock (2011) supported this view by stating that the purpose of guidance and counseling in schools is to improve the academic performance and foster positive study habit, increase acquisitions and application of conflict resolution skills and decrease school dropouts.

Academic performance refers to how well a student is accomplishing his or her tasks and studies (Scort, 2012). According to him, it reflects the outcome of education, the extent to which the student, teacher or institution have achieved their educational goals. Aremu and Sokan (2003) described academic performance as a performance that is judged by the examiner and some significant others as falling below an expected standard. They observed that the academic performance of secondary school students have been poor in recent times and this could be attributed to a variety of factors such as students' inability to manage their time, peer influence, family factor factors and the likes. In secondary schools, there are numerous problems and difficulties that students experience. Some get involved into violent and criminal acts, drug abuse, HIV, other sexually transmitted diseases, teenage pregnancies and induced abortions. These factors have a direct impact not only on the academic performance of the students but also on their lives. Kapur (2018) revealed that these may hamper their psychological



approach and they may even experience problems such as depression, trauma or stress to a major extent. Based on this, he suggested that guidance and counseling services need to be established in schools to help the students to provide solutions to their problems, focus on their studies and become responsible members of the society. In line with this, Aremu (2000) stressed that academic failure is not only frustrating to the students and parents but also affects the society in terms of dearth of manpower in all spheres of the economy and politics.

#### Statement of the Problem

Today, young people are living in an exciting time with an increasingly diverse and mobile society with new technologies and expanding opportunities. Adolescents face unique and diverse challenges both personally and developmentally that has affected their academic performance. In schools, success is measured by the level of the students' academic performance because students' performance remains a top priority for educators but it is unfortunate to know that the academic performance of secondary school students has been declining over time. The goal of education cannot be achieved without the input of professional counselors. Counseling programs play a vital role in preventing educational, personal, social, mental and emotional problems.

Many school administrators are yet to embrace the program because they do not see the benefit of appropriate counseling services. Many of them prefer to use career masters rather than professional counselors for guidance services. The new and advanced professional academic problem-solving techniques can only be delivered by qualified professionals. In schools where guidance and counseling services are available, the number of students attending counseling sessions is low and this has caused serious decline to the academic performance of secondary school students. Owing to the gap identified above, this study seeks to determine the influence of guidance and counseling on the academic performance of secondary school students in the Udi Education Zone.

#### Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the impact of guidance and counseling on students' study habit in Udi Education Zone of Enugu State?

2. What is the impact of guidance and counseling on students' ability to manage their time for better academic performance in Udi Education Zone of Enugu State?

#### Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses was formulated to guide the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

**Ho:** There is no significant difference in the mean response scores of male and female students on the impact of guidance and counseling on students study habit in Udi Education Zone of Enugu State.

**Ho:** There is no significant difference in the mean response scores of male and female students on the impact of guidance and counseling on students' ability to manage their time for better academic performance in Udi Education Zone of Enugu State.

#### Research Method

Survey research design was used in this study. This design was considered appropriate for the study because the subjects were reached in their natural environment. The population of the study consisted of 3,125 2017/2018 SS2 students in Udi Education Zone of Enugu State (Research & Statistics Unit, Udi Zonal Office, PPSMB, Enugu). The sample for the study was 253 SS2 students obtained from 6 intact classes in 6 randomly selected schools from the 55 secondary schools. Out of the 253 students used for the study, 101 are males while 152 are females.

The instrument used for the study was questionnaire of four-point scale consisting of strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The SA, A, D, and SD were scored 4, 3, 2 and 1 points respectively. The instrument was face validated by experts in Education Measurement and Evaluation Department of University of Nigeria, Nsukka. More so, experts in Guidance and Counseling Unit of the same university ensured relevance of its content, clarity of statement and logical organization. The instrument was pilot tested using 67 subjects that did not participate in the main study. Cronbach alpha was employed in establishing the reliability of the instrument which yielded 0.88. The data collected with the instrument was analyzed using mean to answer the research questions while t-test statistic was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 significant level. The criterion of agreement of positive value is a mean of 2.5 and above and that of disagreement of negative value, a mean of below 2.5. Items with mean value of 3.5 and above were considered as being highly rated.



**Results**

The results of the study were presented in line with the research questions and hypotheses. Research question 1 was answered using table 1 below:

**Research Question 1:** What is the impact of guidance and counseling on students' study habit in Udi Education Zone of Enugu State?

**Table 1:** Mean responses of students on the impact of guidance and counseling on students' study habit.

S/N	Items	Male students	Female students	Mean of means	Decision
1.	I read in the night unlike before.	3.15	3.01	3.08	Accepted
2.	I join study groups more often.	3.14	3.22	3.18	Accepted
3.	I carry out all the assignments given in the class by the teacher more than I used to.	3.28	3.07	3.18	Accepted
4.	I have developed interest in the subjects I dislike	3.46	3.18	3.32	Accepted
<b>Total</b>					

Table 1 revealed that an accepted consistency of the respondents' proposed that guidance and counseling has a great impact on the study habit of students. In view of this approach, it shows that school administrators can use guidance and counseling programs to enhance the study habit of secondary school students.

**Research Question 2:** What is the impact of guidance and counseling on students' ability to manage their time in Udi Education Zone of Enugu State?

**Table 2:** Mean responses of students on the impact of guidance and counseling on students' ability to manage their time for better academic performance.

S/N	Items	Male students	Female students	Mean of means	Decision
1.	I make use of the school library whenever there is no teacher in my class.	2.89	2.47	2.68	Accepted
2.	I have my studies every evening after rest.	3.25	3.01	3.13	Accepted
3.	I watch television only on Sundays unlike before.	3.17	3.03	3.10	Accepted
4.	I made a personal reading time table at home and I follow it strictly.	3.05	2.87	2.96	Accepted
<b>Total</b>					

Table 2 shows that respondents have rated all the items which reveal that guidance and counseling helps students to manage their time better in order to perform better in academics.

**Table 3:** Analysis of t-test statistic of mean responses of male and female students on the impact of guidance and counseling on the academic performance of students.

Respondents	N	Mean	S.D.	Df	t-cal val.	t-crit. val	Decision
Males	101	3.3	1.816	251	0.31	1.96	Accept Ho
Females	152	3.12	1.766	251			



Table 3 shows that the t-cal. Value (0.31) is less than t-crit. Value (1.96) which means that the hypothesis of no significant difference is not rejected ( $p < 0.5$ ). Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean response scores of male and female students on the impact of guidance and counseling on students study habit.

**Table 4:** Analysis of t-test statistic of mean responses of male and female students on the impact of guidance and counseling on students' ability to manage their time for better academic performance.

Respondents	N	Mean	S.D.	Df	t-cal val.	t-crit. Val	Decision
Males	101	3.09	1.757	251	0.63	1.96	Accept Ho
Females	152	2.8	1.673	251			

Table 4 shows that the t-cal. Value (0.63) is less than t-crit. Value (1.96) which means that the hypothesis of no significant difference is not rejected ( $p < 0.5$ ). Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean response scores of male and female students on the impact of guidance and counseling on students' ability to manage their time for better academic performance.

#### Discussion of Results

Table 1 relates to the impact of guidance and counseling on students study habit. All the items were rated positively and highly by the respondents showing that they agreed that all the items reflect the impact of guidance and counseling has on their study habit. In support of this finding, Aluede, Imhonde & Eguavoen (2006) revealed that there is gender differences in counseling needs of students. They revealed that the reasons why male and female students visit the school counselor are different. Their gender notwithstanding, they all have similar views on the impact of guidance and counseling on the study habit of students. However, they stated that despite the differences in gender, guidance and counseling services are favorable to students. Tambuwal (2011) stressed that guidance and counseling supported this view by stating that guidance and counseling program is an integral part of the school system and those who consult the school counselor often are better adjusted academically. He also affirmed that such students find their way around complicated curriculum and this in turn enhances their academic performance.

Table 2 shows that all the items were accepted by the respondents as the impact of guidance and counseling on the students' ability to manage their time for better academic performance. Obviously, this finding the need to have a guidance and counselor in every school since its impact on the students and its effect on the academic performance of the students cannot be overemphasized. In line with this, Egbugbe (2006) agreed that educational guidance and counseling helps students to make proper use of their time. He emphasized that this accounts for better performance of students in schools with counselors than schools without.

#### Conclusion

The study revealed that guidance and counseling has great impact on the academic performance of secondary school students. The respondents (students) all agreed that guidance and counseling helps them a lot in improving their reading habit and also helps them a lot in managing their time as can be seen from no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the issues. Reading in the night, joining study groups, carrying out assignments, developing interest in subjects that are hated, making use of the school library during free periods, developing the habit of studying every evening after rest, minimizing the time spent on television and making use of personal time table are different ways guidance and counseling can help students in improving their reading habits and managing their time thereby, adjusting themselves and achieving better performance academically. In view of this research report, the employment of guidance counselors in every school appears to be imperative and urgent if our educational system is to be redeemed.

#### Recommendation

Recommendations were made based on the findings of the study. They were made as follows:

1. The Ministry of Education in each state should enforce the establishment of guidance and counseling centers in both public and private secondary schools.
2. The principals should employ professional counselors and discard the use of career masters in schools.
3. The school administrators should give necessary support to the counselor by creating awareness on the importance of guidance and counseling in the school.
4. The counselors should apply all the necessary skills and techniques in order to get the best out of the students who come to them for assistance.



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