Influence of Educational Counselling on the Academic Performance of Primary School Pupils in Rivers State

1Eremie, Maxwell D. & 2Ukoima Nkalo Ruth

Department of Educational Foundations, Rivers State University
Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT
Educational counselling programmes in a school assist the primary school pupils in the establishment of realistic academic goals, improve their study habits and develop their cognitive abilities and thereby develop their full potentials. All these are geared towards improving their academic performance. This study sought to establish the influence of educational counselling on the academic performance of primary school pupils in Rivers State. This study adopted the descriptive survey design. It targeted 500 public primary school teachers in Rivers State, 300 female teachers and 200 male teachers. The teachers were randomly selected from the 20 public primary schools in Rivers State. The study established the following findings; It shows that counselling is very important in the pupil’s academic life, also the findings reveal that if the pupils make good use of the counselling services in their school, their academic performance will improve. As a result of the findings, recommendations were made; Government should employ counselors and send them to all the primary schools in the State School. Also, counselors should be well taken care of.

Keywords: Influence, Education, Counselling, Academic, Performance, Pupils, Realistic, Goals.

INTRODUCTION
Guidance and Counselling are two closely related concepts. According to Akinade (2016) guidance refers to a broad area of all educational activities and services aimed at assisting individuals, students to understand themselves and adjust to school life. Afande (2015) defined it as a learning – oriented process which occurs in an interactive relationship with the aim of helping the clients to learn about themselves. Guidance and counselling is therefore aimed at bringing about maximum development and self realization of human potential for the benefit of the individual and society, in schools or any learning environment. The programme assists students in harmonizing their abilities, understand values also enable them to develop their full potential. The development of Guidance and counselling originated from Europe and the United States of America in the 1908, while in Nigeria it was traced back to 1958 when Catholic Reverend sisters in St. Theresa College, Ibadan recognized the need to give adequate career or vocational guidance to the final year students, the Reverend sisters were assisted by those who have made remarks in their different field of endeavor to give career talk on their different profession to the final year students. At the end of the exercise the outcome was encouraging. This was how guidance and counselling started in Nigeria.

The Federal Government of Nigeria appreciates the need for Guidance and counselling services in our schools and reflected it in the National policy of Education (1981) this has helped to make all the state governments to establish guidance and counselling units in their ministries of education. In addition, counselling units should be established in all universities and other institutions. Though Guidance and counselling is new in Nigeria, it is gradually making its impact.
It is playing a great role in the implication of the ongoing 6-3-3-4 system of education in Nigeria, but despite the introduction of Guidance and counselling in almost all the Primary and Secondary schools. It has been observed that pupil’s academic performance especially in the public schools seem to be declining because of poor study habit among primary school pupils. These necessitated the need to find out if guidance and counselling can influence the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Rivers State. One of the variables in this study is study habits of the pupils, how effective it is and how it relates to their academic performance.

**Statement of the Problem**

Poor academic performances among Primary school pupils are a source of concern. As a result of this, the role of the guidance counsellor is needed to facilitate the academic performance of Primary school pupils. Little information is available on the extent to which guidance and counselling has assisted in raising the academic performance of Primary school pupils. The problem of the study therefore is to determine the educational counselling on the Primary school pupil’s academic performance in Rivers State.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to determine the influence of educational counselling on the academic performance of Primary school pupils in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives are to determine:

1. Educational counselling on the primary school pupils’ realistic academic goals.
2. Educational counselling on the primary school pupils’ study habits.
3. Educational counselling on the primary school pupils’ cognitive abilities.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions were posed to guide the study:

1. How does educational counselling affect pupils’ establishment of realistic academic goals?
2. To what extent does educational counselling improve pupils’ study habit?
3. How does educational counselling affect pupils in the development of their cognitive abilities?

**Hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses were formulated for this study:

1. There is no significant difference in the pupils’ realistic establishment of academic goals.
2. There is no significant difference in the primary school pupils study habits.
3. There is no significant difference in the cognitive abilities of the primary school pupils.

**Literature Review**

**Theoretical Framework**

This study is based on the principles of client-centered and social learning theories. The client centered theory emphasizes on the human interaction between two people (the counsellor and the client). Client centered or person centered or non-directive counselling was postulated by Carl Rogers in 1980. The person centered theory is a process of helping clients discovers new and more satisfying personal meaning about themselves and their environment. The student will drive towards growth, health and adjustment (Makinde, 1984). The theory assumes that human interaction is only possible when certain condition prevails. According to Omulema (2000), these conditions include counselor’s demonstration of empathy, unconditional positive regards and warmth to the client. He notes that growth occurs in an acceptable, warm, empathic, non-judgmental environment. This environment allows the students to explore their thoughts and feelings and to solve their own problems. Guidance and counselling programmes that lack these characteristics result into poor academic performance.

On the other hand, Social learning theory postulates that a child learns behavior through observation and imitation. This theory is postulated by Bandura (1986). The theory postulates that the behavior is reflective of people observing and imitating others and imagining the consequences of their own behavior. The theory advocates that the human behavior is modified using learning principles. The behavioural approach also emphasizes that the client defined goals in behavioural terms provide resources and encouragement in helping clients more towards goals and help clients with different problems (Patterson, 1973). Makinde (1984), notes that counselling effectiveness and outcomes are accessed by
change in the specific student’s behavior. This simply implies that counselors can use behavioural
counselling to create an enabling environment for the students to modify their behavior in order to solve
their academic performance problems.

Conceptual Framework
The theoretical framework assisted in the conceptualization of this study to show relationship between
guidance and counselling and academic performance of primary school pupils. Counselling programmes
assist pupils to harmonize their abilities, interests and values, thereby developing their full potentials. The
services of the school counsellor are geared towards improving the self image of the pupils and facilitate
better academic performance.

Brief History of Guidance and Counselling
Guidance and Counselling started formally in the United States of America in 1908 via the vocational
guidance work by Frank Person (Father of American Guidance Movement), while 1959 can be regarded
as the date of the commencement of modern guidance in Nigeria. That year, the catholic Reverend Sisters
in St. Theresa’s college, Ibadan recognized the need to give adequate career or vocational guidance to
their final year students. So in 1958, the sisters assisted by Mrs. Oruwariye invited interested and
enlightened members of the society to the school. They invited specialists who had made their marks in
different professions to give career talks on their profession to the final year students. This motivated
other schools to do the same for their outgoing students. Soon, there was a crop of career masters,
mistresses and teachers who were assigned job of collation and disseminating career information to
students.

In 1962, Ibadan career council was formed. It was composed of distinguished knowledgeable and
philanthropic individuals. Their aim was to propagate vocational guidance to students or the young ones.
They organized workshops, seminars and symposia. In 1967, Nigeria Career Council grew out of the
Ibadan Career Council - the nucleus and support of the Nigeria Career Council. In the early 1960’s Ohio
State University established Olunloyo college of Education at Ibadan. It was designed to produce the
National Certificate of Education graduates in Arts and Science subjects. Emphasis was also on guidance
and counselling in the college. This college was probably the first tertiary institution in which formal
guidance and counselling was taught in Nigeria (Akinade, 2016; Eremie, 2006).

Types of Guidance and Counselling
A number of adjectives have been used to qualify guidance and counselling. These include Educational
(Academic), vocational and personal - social. The focus in this study is educational counselling.
According to Akinade (2016), educational counselling are activities designed to assist all categories of
learners (from primary, secondary to tertiary levels). It involves counselling the gifted, talented,
handicapped and average learners in resolving various types of academic problems. It aims at assisting the
learner to make the most of his educational opportunities. This means educating him towards becoming a
cultivated individual and at the same time preparing him for participating in a life activity which will be
socially useful and personally satisfying.

The Need for Guidance and Counselling in Schools
Guidance and counselling is needed for the following reasons:

- Education changes
- Economic changes
- Technological changes
- Social changes
- Ideological changes

The focus here is on Educational changes. With the introduction of the 6, 3, 3, 4 system of education in
Nigeria. Therefore, the need for guidance and counselling personnel to assist individuals improve their
study habits and to teach them the techniques they will employ to pass their examinations easily became
necessary. Also counselling in schools and colleges enables the country to identify her talented youths and nurture them to the optimal levels of social, educational and economic development (Agi, 2008)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter is concerned with the methods and design that is used in this study.

Design of the Study

Baridam (2001), defined research design as the framework or plan that is used as a guide in collecting and analyzing data for the study. The descriptive survey design is adopted for the study. The choice of survey design for the study is because it allows for the use of questionnaire.

Population of the Study

The population of the study is comprised of the 20 public primary school teachers in Port Harcourt and Obio-Akpor Local Government Areas of Rivers State. The total population of the teachers consists of 1,070 female teachers and 698 male teachers making the total of 1768 teachers in the 20 public primary schools selected in Port Harcourt and Obio-Akpor Local Government Areas in Rivers State.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample size for the study was made up of 300 female teachers and 200 male teachers. This means that the sample size for this study is 500 public primary school teachers. The sample size in this study represents 30% of the target population. The sample technique used was simple random sampling technique.

Research Instrument

The researcher designed a 12 item questionnaire titled “Educational Counselling and Academic Performance of Primary School Pupils” (ECAPP). To select data for the study, the questionnaire contains two sections namely A and B. Section A sought to provide information on personal data of the respondents with items such as Name, Name of School, Sex, Marital Status, Educational qualification and their years in service. Section B this section provides information on the three research questions in a 4 point likert rating scale, rated as strongly agree (4 points) agree (3 points) disagree (2 points) and strongly disagree (1 points).

Validation of the Instrument

In order to ensure proper content of the instrument the items were constructed after careful review of the related literature on the influence of educational counselling on the academic performance of primary school pupils.

Reliability of the Instrument

To establish the reliability of the instrument, the researcher employ the Test – Retest method, using 300 female teachers and 200 male teachers in public primary schools in Port Harcourt and Obio-Akpor Metropolis, giving a total of 500 respondents. The respondents responded twice in 2 weeks interval. Their responses were analyzed, using the Pearson’s product moment correlation coefficient to obtain the reliability coefficient value of 0.72 which was recommended for this study.

Administration of the Instrument

The instrument (questionnaire) was administered by the researcher to the respondents in their various schools on different days, at times the assistance of the teachers was utilized and the school counselors were available. A total of 500 copies of questionnaire were distributed and retrieved for the analysis this means that there was 100% response by the respondents. Permission was given to the researcher by the Headmasters and Headmistresses of the different schools.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was done using the descriptive statistics of mean to provide answers to the research questions while t-test statistics technique was used at 0.05 level, to find out whether there will be a significant difference in the mean scores of the pupils with counselling influence.
RESULTS

Research Question 1: Does educational counselling influence pupils’ establishment of academic goals?

Table 4.1: Mean Scores of Respondents on Counselling Influence on Pupils Establishment of Realistic Academic Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Questionnaire items</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>∑x</th>
<th>Mean total X</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The Head Master or Head Mistress recognizes the importance of the school counsellor and refer pupils to the counselling unit.</td>
<td>250 (100)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1700</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The counselling unit is open to all pupils with academic problems.</td>
<td>270 (1080)</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1750</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Making use of the counselling services has positive influence on the pupils’ performance academically.</td>
<td>250 (1000)</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1660</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Visiting the counsellor has helped the pupils cope with academic work and also interact well with teachers and other pupils.</td>
<td>300 (1200)</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1740</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 indicates that the respondents accepted the view that the Head Masters and Mistresses are aware of the importance of the school counselor. The respondents also accept the view that the counselling unit is open to all pupils with academic problems. They accepted the fact that counselling has increased the pupils’ academic performance. The respondents accepted that the pupils visiting the counsellor have helped them cope with their academic work and interact better with teachers and other pupils.
Research Question 2: To what extent does educational counselling affect pupils’ study habits?

Table 4.2: Mean Score of Respondents on Counselling Influence on Study Habits of Primary School Pupils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Questionnaire items</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Σx</th>
<th>Mean total X</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The counsellor advised the pupil to take down notes correctly.</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1580</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The counsellor encouraged the client (pupil) to make friends with intelligent pupils.</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1730</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The counsellor advised the pupils to attend classes regularly.</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1780</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The counsellor advised the pupils not to hate any subject or teacher.</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1680</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grand Mean** 3.42

Table 4.2 shows that the respondent accepted that counselling guided the pupils properly to take down notes correctly. The respondents accepted that the counsellor matching the pupils with poor academic stands with intelligent ones will help them. The respondents also agreed that the pupils should attend classes regularly. They accepted also that not hating any subject or teacher will help improve the pupil’s academic performance.
Research Question 3: *How does educational counselling influence in the development of their cognitive abilities?*

### Table 4.3: Mean Score of Respondents on the Counselling Influence in the Development of Cognitive Abilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Questionnaire items</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>∑x</th>
<th>Mean total X</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The counsellor made the pupils understand that their cognitive abilities come from the brain.</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1750</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1120</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The counsellor advised the pupils that their cognitive ability affect the mechanism of how they learn.</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1040</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The counsellor encouraged the pupils to develop their cognitive abilities as it will help them in problem solving.</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1740</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1120</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Counsellor advised the pupils not to develop their cognitive abilities as it will damage their brains later in life.</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1020</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>400</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>260</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grand Mean** 3.23

Table 4.3 indicates that the respondents accepted that the respondents accepted that the counsellor made the pupils understand that their cognitive abilities come from the brain. The table also indicates that the respondents accepted that the counsellor made them understand that their cognitive ability affects their mechanism of understanding. The respondents accepted that the pupils’ cognitive ability will help them in problem solving. Finally the respondents rejected the view that if cognitive ability is developed it will damage their brain in the future.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the pupils’ realistic academic goals.

### Table 4.4: t-test Analysis of Significant Difference in Pupils’ Realistic Academic Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>No. of Correspondence</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>t-crit</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significance p<0.05
Analysis on table 4.4 reveals that the $t_{cal}$ (2.07) is greater than the $t_{crit}$ (1.96). This implies that there is no significant difference in the primary school pupils’ realistic academic goals in Rivers State. Therefore, null hypothesis 1 is rejected.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the primary school pupils’ study habits.

| Table 4.5: t-test Analysis of Significant Difference in the Primary School Pupils’ Study Habits |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| Status            | No. of Correspondence | X    | SD    | Df    | $t_{cal}$ | $t_{crit}$ | Decision |
| Male              | 200                      | 3.00 | 28    |       | 3.92      | 1.96      | Significant |
| Female            | 300                      | 2.91 | 30    | 498   |           |           |           |

Significance P<0.05

Analysis on table 4.5 reveals that the $t_{cal}$ (3.92) is greater than the $t_{crit}$ (1.96). This implies that there is significant difference in the primary school pupils’ study habits. Therefore, null hypothesis 2 is rejected.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference in the cognitive abilities of primary school pupils.

| Table 4.6: t-test Analysis of Significant Difference in the Primary School Pupils’ Cognitive Abilities |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| Status            | No. of Correspondence | X    | SD    | Df    | $t_{cal}$ | $t_{crit}$ | Decision |
| Male              | 200                      | 2.99 | 0.25  | 0.25  | 2.07      | 1.96      | Significant |
| Female            | 300                      | 3.02 | 0.22  | 498   |           |           |           |

Significance p<0.05

Analysis on table 4.6 indicates that the $t_{cal}$ (2.07) is greater than the $t_{crit}$ (1.96). This implies that there is no significant difference in the cognitive abilities of primary school pupils. Therefore, null hypothesis 3 is rejected.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The major findings are as follows:

- The pupils making good use of the school counselling services contributes to the pupils high academic performance in public primary schools in Rivers State.
- Visiting the counselling units has increased the study habits of primary school pupils. As this translated into their academic performance.
- Using counselling services that is available in the primary schools contributed to the development of the children’s cognitive abilities and also increased their academic performance.
- Significant difference was found in the main score of pupils who make use of the counselling services in their schools, this translated into their academic performances
- There was significant difference found in the mean scores of the primary school pupils’ study habits that visits the counselling units.
- There was significant difference found in the mean scores of the primary school pupils’ cognitive abilities that make use of the counselling unit as this was seen in their academic performance.
- The findings are in agreement with the research work done by (Egbo, 2015). Also the research done by Cheek *et al.* (2002) which indicated that pupils with poor academic
performance can improve by making friends with intelligent classmates. It also indicated that taking down notes and attending classes is very important for academic growth.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**
Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:
1. Government should employ the services of the guidance counsellor to all the public primary schools in the State.
2. School counselors should be backed up legally.
3. Conducive office space should be provided for the counsellor posted to schools.
4. Psychological tests should be available for the school counselor’s use.
5. School counselors should be allowed to practice instead of teach.
6. The Government and school administration should give the counsellor all the necessary support.

**REFERENCES**