



# **Influence of Guidance and Counseling Services on Students' Academic Adjustments in Public Secondary Schools Of Rivers State**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of guidance and counseling services on students' academic adjustments in public secondary schools of Rivers State. Three research objectives and research questions were raised using descriptive survey for the study. The population of the study was 2253 respondents (12 teacher counsellors and 2241 students). Taro Yamene's formula was used to determine the sample size of 339 for students while (73 lecturers and 249 students) respondents and the sampling techniques used were simple random sampling techniques and census for teacher counselors. The instrument used was "Influence of Guidance and Counselling Services on Students' Academic Adjustments in Public Secondary Schools of Rivers State (IGCSSAAQ)". A 4-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LH) and Very Low Extent (VLF) was used and the respondents were requested to select one of the four (4) options. Test-re-test method was used for the reliability test which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.76 using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ) formula. The instrument was validated by the researcher supervisor in Guidance and Counselling in Educational foundations two other experts in Measurement and Evaluation. The mean and standard deviation was used in analyzing the research questions while the z-test was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of this study revealed that Guidance and Counselling Services has an influence on students' compliance to rules and regulation, school social environment, motivation to learn, and adaptation to physical school environment. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that Ministry of Education should develop a training programme for guidance and counseling teachers in secondary schools through in-service training and Guidance and Counselling programme should be strengthened in order to improve the academic adjustments and performance of secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Keywords:** Guidance, Counseling Services on Students and Academic Adjustments

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is one of the leading instruments for promoting economic development as it encompasses some processes individuals go through to help them develop and utilize their potentials (Adeyemi and Adu, 2010).

Guidance plays very important role in removing the educational, personal, social, mental, emotional and other similar problems of the students. Guidance as a term refers to a broad area of educational activities and services aimed at assisting individuals in making and carrying out adequate plans leading to achievement of desired life, Gibson, 2008. Counselling is a process designed to help clients understand

and clarify personal views of their life space, and to learn to reach their self-determined goals through meaningful, well-informed choices and a resolution of problems of an emotional or interpersonal nature. It believes that every human individual has the potential for self-growth, self-development and self-actualization. Many people have blamed the banning of the cane for the escalating cases of the school unrests. Counseling is also a method of behavior change.

Counseling makes a student feel closer to the teacher thereby establishing friendly relationship. The student has the freedom to express him or herself and realize the consequences of his or her misbehaviour, in the process positive discipline is ensured. Counseling is the skilled and principled use of relationships that self-knowledge, emotional acceptance lead to personal growth. It is more concerned with addressing and resolving specific problems such as making decisions, coping with crises, working through feelings and inner conflicts or improving relationships with others.

Counseling service is a face to face interaction between the counsellor and the students, through which students are assisted towards overcoming obstacles to their academic, vocational, personal-social progress and other life needs. Placement service is concerned with assisting students to adjust to the next stage of development whether in school or on the job. Orientation service is designed to familiarize fresh students with their environment. It is a process of initiating an individual to a work or learning situation and of instructing him about rules, regulations and responsibilities, as an introduction to a new situation. Referral service affords the school counsellor an opportunity to refer the cases which he cannot handle to specialists like clinical psychologist, medical practitioner and others. Follow-up, evaluation service are designed to ascertain the extent to which the guidance programme previously carried out by the school is meeting the objectives for which it was established and also to monitor the progress of students in their work places. Research service helps the school counsellor to discover relevant information that can improve students' learning and understanding. The services should be an on-going process which professional counsellors should embrace and encourage. These services constitute the core of any guidance program and should be organised to facilitate the growth and development of all students from kindergarten through post high school experiences (Erford, 2010; Erford, 2011; Neukrug, 2011).

Guidance and counselling in school is to address the needs and concerns of students or learners at different levels of academic or educational development. Braddock (2001), states that the purpose of guidance and counselling in schools is to improve academic achievement, foster positive study attitudes and habit, increase acquisitions and application of conflict resolution skills and decrease school dropouts. The primary mission of a school's guidance and counselling program is to provide a broad spectrum of personnel services to the students.

Guidance and counselling services therefore play an important role in preventing educational, social, mental emotional and similar problems. The reduction or elimination of such problems among students assures them of a better life and subsequent achievement of their full potential. When such a state is achieved, the student is said to have attained school adjustment. The way students respond to and perceive the influence of guidance and counselling services on their adjustment to school will, to a great extent determine whether or not guidance and counselling services are needed or will be effectively utilized in schools (Eyo, Joshua, & Esuong, 2010). Guidance and counseling services are vital elements in discipline management of people in all societies; even the most primitive societies grew out of the necessity of guiding individual behaviour patterns in the interest of the group. Society itself could not function without the exercise of discipline. Using guidance and counseling to promote discipline must continually be practiced if people are to work harmoniously for the achievement of the common purpose.

Hendrikz (2006) stresses that teachers and school administrator have the responsibility of ensuring that students matures steadily along his/her own personal line. Students are priceless assets and most essential element in education. It was absolutely necessary to direct students to exhibit acceptable attitude and behavior within and outside the school. The rapid expansion of student enrolment in most African countries since the attainment of political independence, coupled with inadequate resources to cope with the ever increasing demand for educational provision, had made school management a much more complex and difficult enterprise than a few decades ago. Meyer (2007) states that discipline problems in schools and institutions are perhaps the single greatest cause of concern for educators globally. Based on

this, the researcher is interested in finding out the Influence of Guidance and Counseling Services on Students' Academic Adjustments in Public Secondary Schools of Rivers State

### **Statement of the Problem**

Guidance and counselling programs in Nigeria were established to assist students develop competencies needed to overcome academic, career and personal challenges, (Federal Government of Nigeria; NPE, 2004). Guidance and counselling services face a number of challenges. Auni, Songok, Odhiambo & Lyanda (2014) note that majority of the heads of department do not have adequate training that would help them to handle the varied issues affecting students in schools since the short term workshops and seminars that the majority of them had attended were not sufficient in empowering them to effectively guide and counsel students. The guidance and counselling teachers also had other responsibilities in schools with heavy subject loads and therefore not able to run the programme well. The same study also reported that some students had a poor attitude towards the programme and were not willing to confide in teachers doubling up in the guidance and counselling activities and being a member of the disciplinary committee.

Indiscipline cases in public secondary schools in Rivers State had become a matter of concern in recent years to all stakeholders. Sources from education office (2011) indicate that for the last three years over ten schools have had major indiscipline cases that has caused harm to the students, teachers, and parents resources of unknown value destroyed and academic performance had been adversely affected. Student discipline task force (2009) recognized the use of guidance and counseling service to manage indiscipline. In considering that, the problem of study is to examine the influence of guidance and counseling services on students' academic adjustments in public secondary schools of Rivers State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of guidance and counseling services on students' academic adjustments in public secondary schools of Rivers State. The specific objectives are:

1. To determine the extent guidance and counseling services influenced students' compliance to rules and regulations as a base for their academic adjustments in public secondary schools of Rivers State.
2. To determine the extent guidance and counseling services influence students' adjustment to their social school environment as a base for their academic adjustments in public secondary schools of Rivers State.
3. To determine the extent guidance and counseling services influenced students' motivation to learn as a base for their academic adjustments in public secondary schools of Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions will guide the study.

1. To what extent have guidance and counseling services influenced students' compliance to rules and regulations as a base for their academic adjustments in public secondary schools of Rivers State?
2. To what extent have guidance and counseling services influence students' adjustment to their social school environment as a base for their academic adjustments in public secondary schools of Rivers State?
3. To what extent have guidance and counseling services influenced students' motivation to learn as a base for their academic adjustments in public secondary schools of Rivers State?

### **Hypotheses**

In this research, the following hypotheses were postulated.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of teacher counselors and students' on the compliance to rules and regulations as a base for academic adjustments in public senior secondary schools of Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of teacher counselors and students' on the social school environment as a base for academic adjustments in public senior secondary schools of Rivers State.

3. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of teacher counselors and students' on motivation to learn as a base for academic adjustments in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Concept of Guidance and Counseling**

According to Herman (2009), 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. Port Harcourt, (2007) explains that: "a student may not work hard to realize his potential because he or she has a low concept about himself or herself, lacks personal security or may be experiencing excessive pressure to succeed hence causing anxiety and tension that hinder his or her learning." Therefore any problem that is an obstacle to a student is an important one and where possible should be dealt with through Guidance and Counseling.

### **Concept of Academic Adjustments**

Adjustment to school is influenced by different personal and family characteristics, and societal trends. It is the interaction of the child's personal characteristics and their experiences that determines how the student adjusts to school (Margetts, 2002). Baker and Sink (200V) stated that educational and academic demands of the school with which students' are confronted, such as: interaction with lecturers and fellow students on academic tasks, career plans, adapting to personal environment with new rules, demands, expectations, and responsibilities.

School adjustment is the process of coping with the role of being a student and to other aspects of the school environment. Failure to adjust can lead to mental health issues and school dropout and may require counselling. Students face many adjustments in school such as changes in teachers, classrooms, school and class rules and procedures, performance expectations, difficulty of the work, and peers. Their successes in negotiating these challenges predict school success.

### **Extent Guidance and Counseling Services Influenced Students' Compliance to Rules and Regulations as a Base for their Academic Adjustments**

Guidance and Counselling creates a free, conducive and relaxed atmosphere for interaction and decision making and, generally it has a great bearing on the learner's performance in examinations. Properly discharged, counseling would minimize drop-outs especially of mature group of learner. Guidance and counselling entails that institutions, especially schools, should promote the efficient and happy lives of individuals by helping them adjust to social realities. The disruption of community and family life by industrial civilization convinced many that guidance experts should be trained to handle problems of individual adjustment. Though the need for attention to the whole individual had been recognized by educators since the time of Socrates, it was only during the 20th century. Those researches actually began to study and accumulate information about guidance.

### **Compliance Problems to Rules and Regulations in Secondary Schools**

The increase wave of misconduct and resultant effect showed that discipline had become a major problem of educational management in Nigeria Napkodia (2010). It is observed that students resort to unconstitutional measure in channeling their grievances and it is not unusual that schools have been blamed for the awkward and uncivilized behavior demonstrated by the students. In Port Harcourt the problem of indiscipline in secondary schools had escalated in the past few decades. Mbiti (1974) the cases have continued to increase unabated.

Resources worth millions of schillings have been lost. On his annual report on indiscipline he noted that many perpetrators of violence in most of Rivers State schools were never reported. Drug abuse was common among students in Rivers State; the commonly used drug is bhang. This was because it was cheap and easily available. This poses a major health problem. Many students take drugs as an escape from their existing problems in school and home as observed by Mutie and Ndambuki (2002) aggressive behavior; depression and anxiety are features of drug abuse among the students. Other form of disciplinary problem according to Ajowi and Simatwa (2010) noted that bullying is usually a compensation for a poor-self-concept. Student hides fear feeling of inadequacy behind act of bullying. Bullying could be attempting, to strike back at unfriendly world or seek attention due to feelings of

insecurity, poor socialization as stated by Birichi and Rukungu (2009). Laxiness is key disciplinary problem, students seem not ready to sit for mock examinations and other examinations, and they felt unprepared. Ajowi and Simatwa (2010) said that strict supervision of these examination resorts in inciting other students to cause havoc so that they will have excuses why they fail to perform.

#### **Status of Guidance and Counseling in Enhancing Student Compliance to Rules and Regulation**

Biswalo (1996) noted that secondary schools have a two-fold crucial responsibility: to nurture students who have varying abilities, capacities, interest and unlimited potentials and to prepare those individual to become effective functioning members of their changing societies. Moreover Mutie and Ndambuki (2002) point out that most of the students in secondary schools comprises of adolescent marked by emotional development that include mood swing, enthusiasm, tenderness, cruelty, curiosity and apathy, it is marked with increase in crime and delinquency. For instance secondary schools have been associated with students' unrest. I his antisocial behavior could be a mirror image of violence. Individual or collectively should eschew violence as a way of solving problems in favor of dialogue as stated (Ndu, 2004). Effective guidance and counseling service need to be based on a complete understanding of student experience. Thus effective guidance and counseling service arc not only crucial for those student who- deviate from the norms, but for all students as noted by Mutie and Ndambuki (2004). Therefore all students would require guidance and counseling service in order to develop their academic, social and personal competence.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design:** Descriptive survey design was used to carry out this study. The comparative analysis was achieved by means of utilizing z-test statistic for the comparison of mean scores at 0.05 level of significance. While, the research questions were answered by descriptive statistics: Mean and Standard deviation.

**Population and Sample of the Study:** The population is at of 2233 teacher counselors and students in the public senior secondary school in the three local government areas in Rivers State. The simple random sample of 351 teacher counselors and students was drawn from the study.

**Instrumentation:** The instrument used for this investigation was A 4-point Modified Likert scale which is an interval scale-ranging from Very High Extent to Very low Extent, with a numerical value ranging from 4 points to 1 points. The instruments that were used for this study were the questionnaire titled: Guidance and Counseling Services on Students' Academic Adjustment in Public Secondary school Questionnaire (GCSSAAQ). The instrument has 20 (twenty) items. A weighted average of 2.5 was accepted for research questions.

**Validation and Reliability of the Instrument:** The instrument was validated by Experts in Guidance and Counselling in Educational foundations to scrutinize and two other experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the faculty of Education, who ascertained the face and content validity. The reliability of the instrument was determined through test-re-test method, using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistical tool. A reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained for the study.

**RESULTS**

**Research Question 1:** *To what extent have guidance and counseling services influenced students' compliance to rules and regulations as a base for their academic adjustments in public secondary schools of Rivers State?*

**Table 1: Extent Guidance and Counseling Services Influenced Students' Compliance to Rules and Regulations as a Base for their Academic Adjustments**

S/ N	Items	Teacher Counsellors (n = 12)			Student (n = 339)		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
1.	Guidance and counseling train students to accept authority instead of being (breed to do So through punishments)	3.00	0.82	Accepted	3.01	0.47	Accepted
2.	Teachers in this school view guidance and counseling as effective tool for managing discipline in the school	3.50	0.50	Accepted	3.45	0.55	Accepted
3.	The involvement of all teachers in guidance and counseling has helped us to improve discipline	3.00	0.82	Accepted	2.93	0.53	Accepted
4.	Guidance and counseling programs help to improve students-teachers relationship	2.67	1.03	Accepted	2.50	0.77	Accepted
<b>Total Mean/Std. Dev.=</b>		<b>12.17</b>	<b>3.17</b>		<b>11.89</b>	<b>2.32</b>	
<b>Grand Mean/Std. Dev.=</b>		<b>3.04</b>	<b>0.79</b>		<b>2.97</b>	<b>0.58</b>	

Source: Survey Data, 2020

Table 1 showed that all the items in the table were accepted. However, the grand mean of the respondents which is 3.04 and 2.79 is greater than the mean cut off point of 2.50 which implies that guidance and counseling services influenced students' compliance to rules and regulations as a base for their academic adjustments in public secondary schools of Rivers State.

**Research Question 2:** *To what extent have guidance and counseling services influence students' adjustment to their social school environment as a base for their academic adjustments in public secondary schools of Rivers State?*

**Table 2: Extent Guidance and Counseling Services Influence Students' Adjustment to their Social School Environment as a Base for their Academic Adjustments**

S/ N	Items	Teacher Counsellors (n = 12)			Student (n = 339)		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
1.	Guidance and Counselling on study skills helped me adjust to the school academic environment	3.83	0.37	Accepted	3.65	0.53	Accepted
2.	Guidance on career choice helped me adjust to school academic environment	3.42	0.76	Accepted	3.43	0.55	Accepted
3.	Guidance on time management helped me adjust to school academic environment	3.00	0.82	Accepted	3.03	0.39	Accepted
4.	Guidance on how to discover my potential in academics helped me adjust to the school academic environment.	2.67	1.03	Accepted	2.50	0.77	Accepted
<b>Total Mean/Std. Dev.=</b>		<b>12.92</b>	<b>2.98</b>		<b>12.63</b>	<b>2.24</b>	
<b>Grand Mean/Std. Dev.=</b>		<b>3.23</b>	<b>0.75</b>		<b>3.16</b>	<b>0.56</b>	

Source: Survey Data, 2018

Table 2 showed that all the items in the table indicated a positive response with mean scores of 3.83, 3.42, 3.00 and 2.67 for teacher counselors and 3.65, 3.43, 3.03 and 2.50 for students respectively. The response of the respondents showed that guidance and counseling services influence students' adjustments to their social school environment as a base for their academic adjustment in public secondary schools of Rivers

State. This confirmation was made by the grand mean of 3.23 and 3.16 for teacher counselors and students respectively.

**Research Question 3:** *To what extent have guidance and counseling services guidance and counseling services influenced students' motivation to learn as a base for their academic adjustments in public secondary schools of Rivers State'?*

**Table 3: Extent Guidance and Counseling Services Influenced Students Motivation to Learn as a Base for their Academic Adjustments**

S/ N	Items	Teacher Counsellors (n = 12)			Student (n = 339)		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
1.	Counseling our new students on study skills Have helped them adjust to school's academic environment	3.75	0.43	Accepted	3.65	0.53	Accepted
2.	Guidance and Counselling on time management has helped our students adjust to school's academic environment	2.67	1.03	Accepted	2.50	0.77	Accepted
3.	Counseling our students to balance between co-curricular and curricular activities has enabled them to adjust to school's academic environment	3.58	0.49	Accepted	3.47	0.58	Accepted
4.	Guiding and Counselling our students on choice of subjects has enhanced their adjustment to school's academic environment	3.33	0.47	Accepted	3.42	0.57	Accepted
<b>Total Mean/Std. Dev.=</b>		<b>13.33</b>	<b>2.42</b>		<b>13.04</b>	<b>2.45</b>	
<b>Grand Mean/Std. Dev.=</b>		<b>3.33</b>	<b>0.61</b>		<b>3.26</b>	<b>0.61</b>	

**Source: Survey Data, 2020**

Table 3 showed that all the items in the table were accepted. However, the grand mean of the respondents which is 3.33 and 3.26 which is greater than the mean cut off point of 2.50, which implies that guidance and counseling services influenced students' motivation to learn as a base for their academic adjustments in public secondary schools of Rivers State.

**Test of Hypotheses**

The hypotheses testing was done according to each hypothesis posed in chapter one.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the mean rating of teacher counselors and students on the compliance to rules and regulations as a base for academic adjustments in public secondary schools of Rivers State.

**Table 4: z-test Analysis of Responses for Teacher Counsellors and Students on the Compliance to Rules and Regulations as a Base for Academic Adjustments**

Respondents	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	SE	P	Z-cal	Z-crit	Decision
Teacher Counsellors	12	3.04	0.79					
				0.22	0.05	0.32	1.96	Accepted
Students	339	2.97	0.58					

**Source: Field Survey, 2018**

From table 4, it is seen that z-cal of 0.32 is less than the z-crit of 1.96 and therefore the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean rating of teacher counselors and students on the compliance to rules and regulations as a base for academic adjustments in public secondary schools of Rivers State was accepted.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the mean rating of teacher counselors and students on the social school environment as a base for academic adjustments in public secondary schools of Rivers State.

**Table 5: Z-test Analysis of Responses for Teacher Counsellors and Students on the Social School Environment as a Base for Academic Adjustments**

Respondents	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	SE	P	Z-cal	Z-crit	Decision
Teacher Counsellors	12	3.23	0.75					
				0.23	0.05	0.30	1.96	Accepted
Students	339	3.16	0.59					

**Source: Field Survey, 2018**

From table 5, it is seen that z-cal of 0.30 is less than the z-crit of 1.96 and therefore the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean rating of teacher counselors and students on the social school environment as a base for academic adjustments in public secondary schools of Rivers State was accepted.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference in the mean rating of teacher counselors and students on motivation to learn as a base for academic adjustment in public secondary schools of Rivers State.

**Table 6: z-test Analysis of Responses for Teacher Counsellors and Students on Motivation to Learn as a Base for Academic Adjustments**

Respondents	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	SE	P	Z-cal	Z-crit	Decision
Teacher Counsellors	12	3.33	0.61					
				0.18	0.05	0.39	1.96	Accepted
Students	339	3.26	0.61					

**Source: Field Survey, 2018**

From table 6 it is seen that z-cal of 0.39 is less than the z-crit of 1.96 and therefore the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean rating of teacher counselors and students on motivation to learn as a base for academic adjustments in public secondary schools of Rivers State was accepted.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the analysis of the research questions and hypothesis tested above, the study found as follows: Guidance and Counselling has an influence on students' discipline in public secondary schools of Rivers State; Opportunities to develop relationship skills, ethical standards, and a sense of responsibility and Opportunities to acquire skills and attitudes necessary to develop educational goals which are suited to their needs of intents and abilities. There are other forms of punishments other than corporal punishment that are perceived to influence students' discipline in public secondary schools of Rivers State. Teachers in this school view guidance and counseling as effective tool for managing discipline in the school. Respondents also observed Lack of government policy in the implementation of guidance and counseling services. A general feeling among the respondents was that guidance and counselling influences students' discipline. However, it is a very slow process hence its influence is hardly felt. Demotivating factors identified among teacher counselors were lack of a responsibility allowance, inadequate time to offer the guidance and counselling service, lack of support by other school stakeholders, being disciplinarians and counsellors at the same time and inadequate professional skills.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it was concluded that guidance and counselling is very vital in dealing with students' disciplinary problems in public secondary schools. However, it was observed that effective guidance and counseling in public secondary schools are being hindered by some factors such as lack of



government policy in its implementation, lack of support by teachers and parents, negative attitude about counseling with students.

That most teacher counsellors lack professional training on guidance and counselling and out of those who are not trained in guidance and counselling, only a few have attended seminars on guidance and counselling this hinders effective counselling in public mixed day secondary school in Rivers State. The students benefited from guidance and counselling services especially in areas of learning, relationships and problem solving and discipline observance. Students indicated that they preferred to go for counselling to the peer counselor.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above conclusions, the study makes the following recommendations:

1. The heads of guidance and counselling departments in secondary schools should develop and put in place guidance and counselling programme to be used in the schools for guiding and counselling.
2. The Ministry of Education should develop a training programme for guidance and counselling teachers in schools through in-service course.
3. There is need for the teacher counsellors to implement all the services required for a guidance and counselling programme.
4. There is need to improve the level of training of teacher counsellors in guidance and counselling.
5. Teacher counsellors should take advantage of the positive attitude of the students to enhance career counselling in their schools.

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