



CAREER/VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE/COUNSELLING: A TOOL FOR FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION AND GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY

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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to ascertain the extent to which career guidance/counselling can serve as a tool for functional education and graduate employability. The study was conducted in Kogi State University, Anyigba. A sample size of 500 was selected using stratified and simple random sample techniques, across the faculties of the final year students. The data collected from the sample were analyzed using simple percentage and mean. The results obtained among others were as follows; that the level of guidance and counselling services among the students in the university was not significantly high. There was significant influence in academic performance of students who had received guidance and counselling services as against those who had not. That guidance services serves as motivation for acquisition of skills. It was recommended that guidance and counselling services should be improved upon, and that guidance/counsellors should be employed by university authority. Priority should be focused on the attitude of students toward guidance service and that guidance/counselling services should be given at the point of entry and should be guided to point of graduation. A functional guidance counselling units should be established in all tertiary institution in Nigeria. Fund should be raised by the federal/state governments to maintain guidance units in all our university campuses. By so doing, students focus on their course of studies and those who need change of course to suite their career choice could be assisted through follow up, on graduation they could easily be employed and become functional and useful to themselves and society at large.

Keywords: Guidance/counselling, Vocational, Functional, Employability.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Acquisition of career/vocational skills among graduate for employability is important factors that cannot be relegated to the background. This is because when graduate has the ability and capability to possess and exhibits skill(s) that would proven them to could have studied while in

school, employers would find it easy to employ them. The graduate in turn had no stress to get befitting jobs, which they will have, the satisfaction to commit their will power to it. What can serve as the motivating factors to acquire the necessary skills while schooling is another factor to consider when grooming our teeming youths at the various universities?

In our present day situation where quest for admission into our tertiary institutions is growing at geometrical progression, while admission space, class room environment, human resources, funding and other factors remain stable or constant over time. Universities were not able to place even the qualified students on the list of admission because of large applications. For example in Kogi State University, Anyigba in the just concluded admission for 2012/2013 session, 4250 was admitted out of 19305 applications (Yisa, 2013). So many students were admitted not in the course of their first choice, because of over population in demand for placement. Eventually, most universities fill their vacancy for students in their second choice course or other unpopular areas of study where-in they meet the entry requirement. This may be done but the student may not be interested but because of lack opportunities for admission having waited for a long time for the golden opportunity will accept the offer, but will soon lost interest and definitely his ability to focus on his/her study so as to acquire the necessary skill is affected. This is where guidance and counselling services are needed by the new timers to be able to continue their study.

Furthermore present day students face a lot of challenges which ranges from inadequate hostel, undersized classroom, and insecurity within and outside the campuses, inadequate financial provision by parent dues to economic hazard, peer group pressure and unnecessary demands by some lecturers. Face with all these problems, for genuine physical and mental soundness to be able to settle for their studies and acquire the require skills that pave way for their employment after graduation, they needed guidance counsellor to guide and counsel them, follow them up till they graduate successfully and become useful members of the society.

To facilitate and sustained the university programme, especially for the student's, there is the need for guidance and counselling services alongside , knowing fully that some of these students never had the advantage of any counselling encountered in their secondary schools. Also guidance and counselling services will provide an opportunity for them to appreciate the value, functional and opportunities of the course they offers to them. One way of sustaining student's interest throughout the programme is by establishing guidance services, prominent among the services to be rendered according to Ali (2008) are Placements, Follow up, Information, Appraisal, Referral, Guidance, Counselling and Planning.

More so Guidance and Counselling happens to be one of the developments in the field of Education in Nigeria. It became popular with the introduction of the 6-3-3-4 educational system. It is generally accepted that in Nigeria, the organized/formal guidance started in 1959 at St. Theresa's College, Oke-Ado in Ibadan by some Reverend Sisters, out of concern for the products of their school Egbochuku (2008a). They felt that there was need to offer vocational guidance to

their outgoing final year students. This concern felt by the founders of guidance/counsellors in Nigeria is more needed and paramount, for students of today.

The teacher is an important factor in the guidance programme because he occupies an important position in the life of the students and gives impetus to academic work. Apart from this fact, the role of lecturer/teacher in the counselling programme, according to [Anagbogu \(1988\)](#) is that, the teacher is a motivator, consultant, inspirer, energizer, organizer, creator, initiator, executor and producer of all learning strategies in such a way as to enhance attention, concentration and effective study habit. As teachers/lecturers, are we living up to expectation, to see that students under us are guided as stated by above? This is because objective of guidance programme can only be achieved through the teacher's academic activities, which includes development of cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills of the students. The development of skills in these three areas can boost employment after graduation. It makes the process of education functional in nature and attractive to students.

To facilitate efficient management of guidance and counselling services in Nigeria secondary schools and university, guidance personnel are being trained in the tertiary institutions up to Ph. D level and sent to schools to deliver these services. Also, basic courses in guidance are feature in all teachers-education programmes. Knowing fully that the ultimate aim of education is to develop the students to take initiatives and to encourage them to display a sense of belonging, guidance services could go a long way in helping them to achieve this objective. As noted by [Uba \(1990\)](#) that guidance services assists students to understand themselves by focussing attention on their interests abilities and needs in relation to their homes, schools, communities and environment. When individual understand who he/she is and his/her environment, positive adjustment will take place. Thus guidance is seen and used as an umbrella that covers all the means whereby an institution identifies and response to the individual needs, no matter its source to help the client develop his/her maximum potentials and be able to face life challenges. From the cluster of guidance definitions, there is a consensus, that is, it is a professional planned programme, purposely designed to help handle problems of individual adjustments in school, industries and society to maximise human performance, hence the significance of this study.

1.1. The Level of Guidance Services in Universities

This aspect of this review dwells much on why guidance services in schools, especially university education? What particular area of students requires guidance services and how much of their services have been rendered in school before this time.

The main reason why guidance services are needed in our schools is as a result of population explosion in our schools in 1976 when Universal Primary Education (UPE) was launched. With the introduction of Universal Basic Education (UBE) of 9 – years duration comprising of 6 years of primary education and 3 years of junior secondary education being compulsory and free for all, our school population increased tremendously, [Federal Government of Nigeria \(2004\)](#). This scheme brought the normal, maladjusted, handicapped, and gifted and talent children with diverse

background together. Hence guidance is needed for smooth transition from one stage of education to the next stage. At this level, students were also introduced to varied school subjects such as wood work, electronics, mechanics, physical education, local crafts and at the university level, general studies courses were introduced. Some of these subjects were to enable the students to be self-reliant and to be versatile. [Denga \(1986\)](#) also postulate that guidance counselling at the junior level should be tailored to suit the curriculum, which at this stage consists of core subjects, prevocational subjects and non-vocational lectures. Guidance services at this level apart from helping students overcome their educational problems should also expose them to vocational choice.

In Senior Secondary, the needs for guidance's are in three parts: educational, vocational and personal-social. Educationally, guidance services will helps students to form effective study habits, make good grades, select subject for school certificate examination, ameliorate examination anxieties, reduce examination malpractices, and so on. Vocationally, guidance services are needed at this level, especially at the university level, in order to help students to make appropriate career choice that match their talents, know the relevant entry requirements for each job, know the hazards of different jobs, develop skills writing employment resume and understand conditions of services for different jobs. Furthermore, personal-socially, guidance services are needed in senior secondary to help students overcome their private problems such as family problems such as family problems, bullying, dating, interpersonal relationships, drug abuse, sexual difficulties, cultism, alcoholism, lying, abortion, rioting and raping. The need for guidance services in university education is therefore imperative and of tremendous value if they are properly tailored and channel towards the benefits at the point of university education programmes. It entails psychological/emotional educational and social aspects. Psychological because of his feelings as a university student with the stress of accommodation, inadequate financial provision by parents, insecurity and cultism to mentioned jus but a few. Educational problems may also surface, with the present quest for university education; where-in students are admitted into course they did not option for. Student social responsibility may also hamper their interest in academic quest, and performances. The need for counselling in our universities also stems from the fact that students have some personal- social problem in coping with the stress involved. Some of these problems include: relating with opposite sex, overcoming the psychological/emotional trauma as mentioned earlier, coping with misunderstanding, adjusting to time schedule and etc. To achieve the objectives of university education, guidance/counselling services are heavily needed. The university students needed to be guided, encouraged and counselled to enable them end on positive side. [Egbochuku \(2008a\)](#) conducted a study on the assessment of the quality of guidance and counselling services to student's adjustment in secondary schools in Edo state of Nigeria, and his findings show that there are insufficient counsellors in schools; inadequate availability of counselling facilities; and that the qualification of guidance and counselling personnel has impact on the quality of guidance services they provide to secondary school in Nigeria.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

University education and guidance services need to be analyzed, even though a lot has been done in the area of guidance services in other sectors of education, university students, attitudes toward guidance services is very poor and the provision of the services is worst still relegated to the background. There is no organized programme of guidance/counselling in most of tertiary institution. There is need therefore to assess how guidance services are provided for/to university students and attitude of students toward guidance services that is available. This provides the basis for the present research work which is an attempt to assess the level of guidance services in university education programme in Kogi State University, Anyigba.

1.3. Purpose of Study

The general purpose of this study was to ascertain the degree to which guidance services has helped in achievement of education programme in University, using Kogi State University as the case study. Specifically, this study was designed to find out the following;

1. To find out the level of guidance services render to students in the university.
2. To determined the attitudes of students toward guidance services

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the level of guidance services in Kogi State University?
2. what is the attitudes of students toward guidance/counselling?

2.1. Significance of the Study

The importance of this research work cannot be over emphasized. It is important to students' in our tertiary institutions. It will be of immense help to all those concerned with the education of students (Lecturers).The research will be of value to Kogi State University and other tertiary institution in Nigeria as it will permit management to have an insight into areas where there are needs for guidance services. It will also assist the guidance unit to seek for ways of obtaining and sustaining guidance services support for the students.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research design: The design for this study is survey research design. Survey research design is probably the best method available to social scientists interested in collecting original data for population too large to observe directly [Babbie \(1986\)](#). The use of survey in the present study is justified since the study is descriptive, explanatory and has individual as the unit of analysis for assessment, and survey are also frequently analyzed and reported by such classification as age groups, sex, location, education level and income.

Research area: The study was conducted in Kogi State University, Anyigba. Kogi State University is located at Anyigba. The university is situated in Eastern senatorial district of the state; the state itself is in the central geographical region of Nigeria.

Population of the study: The population of this study as at 2012/2013 session is 20369 (Yisa, 2013)

Sample and sampling techniques: A simple random sampling was implored to 500 students from the total puplation. They were administered with a test to determine those with high scores who had received guidance and counselling services or not, and a questionnaire was serve them to get their responds.

Instrumentation: The questionnaire developed by the researcher were constructed to consist of structured questions which sought information on the level of guidance services expected to could had been received by students and a checklist to assess their attitude toward guidance services.

Validity/reliability of the instrument: The instrument was validated by the expert in the field and Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to establish the reliability and the value was 0.81. It was considered adequately to justify the use of the instrument on the study.

4. PRESENTATION AND DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis of research question one: What is the level of guidance services in Kogi State University, Anyigba? To answer this research question, table 1 was used, that is the percentage values of the respondents.

Table-1. Percentage values of the respondent on the ten questions

S/N	Statements	Yes	% of Yes	No	% of No
1	Guidance services are organize on regular basis	120	24%	380	76%
2	In our university, guidance services are funded adequately	60	12%	440	88%
3	There is follow- up by guidance/counsellors towards maintaining positive change to our studies	85	17%	415	83%
4	Guidance/counsellors team never visit our hostel nor our lecture halls	480	96%	20	4%
5	Guidance/counsellors team sometimes visit our hostels/lecture halls	40	8%	460	92%
6	Guidance services has helped me to be committed to my studies	25	5%	475	95%
7	I only heard of counselling during orientation in my year one.	456	91.2%	44	8.8%
8	I feel the impact of guidance/counsellors in my university	31	6.2%	469	93.8%
9	Some of our lecturers advices once in a while	155	31%	345	69%
10	We have guidance/counselling week in my university	22	4.4%	478	95.6%

From table 1, only 24% agreed that guidance services are organized on regular basis in the university, and the remaining 76% of the students says no to that statement. With respect to funding, only 12% of the student says yes, the rest others say no. On the statement that guidance counsellors never visited their various hostels/lecture halls, we have high response as yes (96%). In other words there is no enough guidance service in the university. The percentage on follow –

up of students by guidance/counsellor is low (17%), which is an indication that such services are not rendered. Commitment to studies by student is not as a result of guidance/counselling services, going by the percentage (5%) of positive responses on this statement. About 91.2% heard counselling words during their orientations, and since then, there has been no impact of counselling services during their course of studies (4/5yrs). And about 31% agreed that some of their lecturers used to counsel them once in a while. The students also affirmed that there is no guidance/counselling services week in the university. It is a week that is normally set aside to sensitize the students on the need for counselling and intensify counselling services to in need. And find ways to attach the students to guidance, who will follow such student up, till he overcome such student overcome the problems. About 31% agreed that their lecturers used to counsel them once in a while, for those who are concerned about student's problems.

Researches question two: What are the attitudes of students toward guidance/counselling?

Table-2. Percentage values of the respondent on the ten statements.

S/N	Statements	Yes	% of Yes	No	% of No
1	I don't think I need guidance/counsellors services	305	61%	195	39%
2	I am aware of guidance/counselling unit in my university	105	21.2%	395	78.8%
3	I have consulted the guidance/counsellor	35	6.2%	465	93.8%
4	Guidance/counselling services cannot influence student's academic performance.	400	80%	100	20%
5	Consulting guidance/counsellor to me, means exposing my problem and weakness.	39	7.8%	461	92.2%

Table 2 indicated that 61% of the sample thinks that they don't need counselling services, this shows negative attitude to the importance of guidance/counselling services. And out of 105 (21.2%) who said that they are aware of guidance services unit in the university, only 35 of them had actually seek the services of guidance/counsellor (6.2%). More so 96% of the students feel guidance/counselling service cannot influence student's academic performance. This is the more reason why the students need sensitization and guidance/counselling week in the university. Although the university just had faculty of education on board, which I will personally make moves to inaugurate the guidance/counselling association.

5. DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

Discussion on research question one: On the overall as reflected on table 1, the high percentage on negative statements and the low percentage on positive statements show that the level of guidance services in the university is significantly low. This means that the level of guidance services rendered among students in university is not significantly high. In other words, level of guidance and counselling services among students in Kogi State University is low. Guidance and counselling services are not recognized. The facilities are not provided on wide note. This is in agreement with Egbochuku (2008a) who found that the level of guidance and counselling services to student's adjustment in secondary schools in Nigeria is significantly low.

Discussion on research question two: From table 2, 61% responded that they need the service of a guidance counsellor and the percentage of those who have consulted guidance and counselling services in course of their studies have a lower percentage (6.20) than those who have not consulted guidance and counselling services (93.80). In other words, students' attitude towards counselling is very low. But in agreement with (Boute, 2002), who demonstrated in a study that students failing in school are those most rejected by their group, and all these factors contributing to academic failure can be taken care of by guidance and counselling services. This is to say that guidance services can help the students to overcome academic failure and can equally help them to attain success and good skills that will them to get lucrative jobs.

Summary: The study was designed to assess the level of guidance/counselling services render to students in Kogi State University, Anyigba. Thus, the purpose of the study was to assess whether the level of guidance services is significantly high, and the attitudes of students toward guidance/counselling services. A sample size of 500 students was selected from final year students across the faculty using stratified and simple random sampling method. An instrument made up of fifteen items for data collection in form of questionnaire was used.

The findings were as follows:

1. The level of guidance services in Kogi State University, Anyigba is not significantly high, that is the level of guidance service was low.
2. The attitudes of students toward guidance/counselling services are negative.

Conclusion: Based on the findings the following conclusions were made;

1. That the level of guidance services in the university is not significantly high. On general note guidance and counselling services is not being appreciated by government and school owners. In other words the government lacks political will towards guidance/counselling services. But guidance services can boost functional education and create good opportunities for good job in our society.
2. That the attitudes of students are negative towards guidance services, and this is why they need sensitization and enlightenment programme on guidance services.

Recommendations: The following recommendations were made;

1. Public awareness campaign in the form of seminar, public lectures, and workshop should be organized to sensitize students, university management, government agencies, lecturers/teachers and the public on the need for guidance services.
2. The entire students should be encouraged to consult guidance/counsellors for services instead of getting frustrated and dropping out of school system.
3. Since guidance services have significant influence on academic performance of students and reshaping them positively for functional education, parents should consult guidance/counsellors when their children have academic problems for solution.

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