



Assessment of Guidance and Counselling Services in Selected Public Secondary Schools in Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study was an assessment of the availability, impacts and challenges of guidance and counselling services in selected public secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population were Teachers and students (JSS2 and SS2) in the Public secondary schools of Ogun West Senatorial District. A total of 400 respondents with 100 teachers and 300 students were selected by using simple random and purposive sampling techniques. Data was collected by two researcher-designed instruments, Guidance and Counselling Services Students Scale (GCSSS) and Guidance and Counselling Services Teachers Scale (GCSTS). The instruments were validated by experts in Guidance and Counselling and Educational Measurement and Evaluation, and were found to have reliability coefficients of 0.82 and 0.79, respectively, by applying the Cronbach's Alpha method. The data obtained was analyzed descriptively using frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The results indicated that the majority of the guidance and counselling services were given in schools and vocational information and career awareness programmes had the highest mean score (Mean = 3.20), while orientation programme for new students had a low mean score (Mean = 2.49). The study also revealed that guidance and counselling services had a positive influence on academic and personal development of students, with the highest mean score on academic development (Mean = 3.27), while the lowest mean score was on personal development, which is on improvement in self-confidence and self-esteem (Mean = 2.43). Major challenges found were that students were not always utilising counselling services (Mean = 3.08), counsellor training opportunities were limited (Mean = 3.06), and privacy/confidentiality was not always maintained (Mean = 2.96). The study found that guidance and counselling services have great impact on students development despite a number of challenges facing the effectiveness of these services in the institution and the profession.

Keywords: Guidance, counselling, services, public secondary schools

1. Introduction

School guidance and counselling services get students ready to imagine rising dependability for their choices and develop in their talents to comprehend and acknowledge the consequences of their decisions. Schools provide a very good opportunity for students to tangle their way through the process of learning and personal development without having guidance and counselling services (Astuti, 2021). The issues of social problems that are going to impact the lives of adolescents are emergent. Competitiveness, harassment, isolation, racial discrimination, unwanted pregnancy among teenagers, family related problems, sibling enmity, low performance in the school, mistreatment, peer pressure and drug abuse are but a few of the challenges that school going children face every day (Karaman, 2021; Yusuf, Zahyah & Muhajir, 2019). Guidance and counselling services have proved to be

very critical in the school to keep learners safe (Hannon, 2021). Therefore school guidance and counselling services are effusive purposeful and accessible to all learners in all schools for the sake of facilitating and assuaging them of the problems they face. Peter, Vipene and Nkpolu (2021) state that schools are mainly focused on delivering the academic curriculum, and this can lead to the neglect of other functions of schools such as providing individual and social education.

Guidance and counselling is a vital educational tool that influences the orientation in a child from negative ideas planted in that child by his/her peers. Guidance and counselling is the process of helping an individual to become aware of himself/herself and the ways in which he/she is responding to the influences of his/her environment. Moreover, to helps him/her to create some personal significance for this behaviour and to form and classify a set of aims and morals for the future behaviour. Guidance and counselling is integrated into the school system in order to help eradicate overwhelming ignorance of many young people on their choices of career prospects, reduce academic failures and personality maladjustment

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among school children.

Egbo (2013) stated that the total development of a child can only take place in an environment that is conducive for teaching and learning. Oniye and Alawane (2008) asserted that guidance and counselling programmes assist students to consolidate their standards, likes and general abilities so that they can realise their full potential. It helps students in making the right career and course choices, overcoming psychological problems and adjusting themselves to the school environment efficiently. Eyo et al. (2010) defines guidance as a 644 programme of services rendered to individuals based on their needs and the effect of environmental factors. She said guidance and counselling is a professional domain with a variety of activities, programmes and services designed to assist people to understand themselves, their problems, their school environment and their world and, at the same time, to develop adequate capacity to make sound choices and decisions.

Oluwatimilehin and Owoyele (2012) observed that students who are exposed to educational guidance and counselling services perform their study better than their counterparts. This explains the need for such practice especially in public secondary schools and less educationally developing cities like Rivers State in Nigeria. These services are “group of formalised educational services designed by the school to assist students to achieve self-knowledge or self-understanding which is essential for them to attain the fullest self-development and self-realization of their potential” (Denga, 2011). These services are: student appraisal service, information service, counselling service, placement service, orientation service, referral service, follow-up and evaluation service, and research service.

According to Egbo (2015), guidance is a collection of services designed to enable individuals to cope with their situations efficiently and to become useful to their community and to themselves. Guidance allows clients to exercise decision making that supports self-direction and adaptation, facilitating substantial changes in their environment, improvement of educational endeavours, and the achievement of realistic goals. Furthermore Egbo (2015) stated that guidance and counselling are geared towards enhancing the holistic development of clients in the various aspects of their lives such as mental, vocational, emotional, intellectual and socio personal dimensions and emphasising the importance of individual worth and dignity. Guidance and counselling services define the duties that professionally qualified guidance counsellors have to perform in a school situation (Adekola & Domingo, 2014). These include the use of standardised psychological tests, academic counselling, orientation, placement, information and career week programmes. Other services include: cumulative record keeping, consulting with parents, guardians and teachers, excursion services, referral and appraisal/testing services (continuous assessment).

School counselling services in particular

should grip provision of support in the amelioration of student to student relationship, student to teacher relationship, student/ parent conflict resolution, students’ study skill, academic amendment plus appropriate assortment of school subjects to mention a few as postulated by Mogbo (2011). Arumugam (2021) stated that, though these services are important, many public schools in Nigeria do not have qualified school counsellors and if they do, they do not have definite duties to perform as they are assigned roles by the principal. On the basis of the above, it is imperative to make assessment of guidance and counselling services in selected secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria.

1.1 Statement of the study

Guidance and counselling services are integral part of secondary school system with a purpose to help students’ academic, personal-social and career development. These services are expected to assist students in public secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria to make informed educational and vocational choices, cope with personal challenges and develop positive attitudes to learning and life. The importance of guidance and counselling services is well acknowledged, nevertheless, there have been growing concerns over the effectiveness and functionality of guidance and counselling services in many public secondary schools.

The guidance and counselling units in several schools are either underutilised or poorly implemented as shown by observations and reports. In some instances there are no trained counsellors, in others teachers without professional counselling qualifications are assigned to perform counselling duties. Poor facilities, inadequate funding, lack of awareness among students and limited administrative support further hamper the delivery of effective services. Consequently, a large number of students may fail to get the help they require to overcome academic hurdles, make career plans, or deal with personal and social matters.

In addition, the increasing rate of students’ behavioural problems, poor academic performance and unclear career direction in some public secondary schools, raises questions about the adequacy and impact of existing guidance and counselling programmes. It is unclear whether these services are effectively meeting the needs of students or achieving their stated objectives. Hence the problem of the study is to examine the availability, adequacy and effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in selected public secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria. This is to identify gaps and suggest improvements for enhanced student support and development.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The main aim was to evaluate guidance and counselling services in selected secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria. In particular, the study examined:

1. The guidance and counselling services in selected secondary schools in Ogun State.
2. The impacts of guidance and counselling services in selected secondary schools in Ogun State.
3. The challenges associated with counseling services in selected secondary schools in Ogun State

1.3 Research Questions

1. Guidance and counselling services in selected secondary schools in Ogun State.
2. Impact of guidance and counselling services in some secondary schools in Ogun State
3. What are the problems of counselling services in selected secondary schools in Ogun State

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study employed descriptive survey research design of survey type. The design was used to evaluate the views of selected participants using questionnaires.

2.2 Population

The target population comprises of Secondary School Teachers and Students (JSS 2 and SS 2) in Ogun West Senatorial District, Ogun State. Nigeria.

2.3 Sampling and sample techniques

Simple random sampling technique was employed in the selection of Ogun West Senatorial District among the three senatorial districts in Ogun State. Two (2) local government areas were randomly sampled from the five (5) local government areas in Ogun West Senatorial district. Five (5) Public and five (5) Public Secondary schools were selected using purposive sampling technique. Simple random technique was used to select two (2) classes, ten teachers and thirty students from each school. A total of One Hundred (100) Teachers and Three Hundred (300) JSS 2 and SS 2 Students took part.

2.4 Research instruments

Two research instruments would be used

- Guidance and Counselling Service Students Scale (GCSS)
- Guidance and Counselling Teacher Scale (GCSTS)

Guidance and Counselling Service Students Scale (GCSS): The GCSSS will be divided into two sections: A and B. Section A will include School Type, Age, Gender, Class and LGA while section B will include relevant information on Guidance and Counselling Services provided to students within the school.

Guidance and Counselling Service Teachers Scale (GCSTS): GCSTS will be of two sections A and B, Section A contain of School Type, Age, Gender, Class Taught, and Qualifications while section B will contain relevant information on Guidance and Counselling Services for Teachers.

2.5 Validity and reliability of the instruments

The GCSSS and GCSTS were validated for content and face validity by experts in Educational Measurement and Evaluation and Guidance and Counselling experts. Experts rated the items on the research objectives, clarity of language, relevance and adequacy of coverage of the constructs being measured. They gave their suggestions and corrections and the instruments were modified and refined to ensure that they adequately measure guidance and counselling services in secondary schools. The tools were designed to reflect the key dimensions of guidance and counselling services such as academic guidance, career counselling, personal-social counselling, availability of services and utilisation. This ensured that the items were collectively measuring the constructs that were intended to be measured.

2.6 Reliability of the Instruments

To assess the reliability of the GCSSS and GCSTS a pilot study was conducted with subjects who were not participants in the main study but were similar to the target population. The internal consistency of the instruments was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha reliability method. The reliability coefficients obtained are respectively GCSSS: 0.82 and CSTSS: 0.79. The values show that both instruments have good internal consistency and are reliable for data collection as coefficients above 0.70 are generally accepted as sufficient for research purposes.

2.7 Method of Data Collection

The researcher used direct administration method to obtain a high response rate and proper guidance of respondents. Prior to data collection, permission was sought from the respective schools. The aim of the study was also well explained to both students and teachers to ensure their cooperation. The instruments were administered by the researcher personally with the help of trained research aides where necessary. Respondents were given enough time to read and answer the items. Instructions were explained clearly to avoid misinterpretation and confidentiality of responses was assured. The questionnaires were immediately collected on the spot after completion to minimise loss and ensure a high rate of retrieval. The collected data were then screened, coded and prepared for analysis.

2.8 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected for the study were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics including frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation were used to summarise and describe the demographic characteristics of respondents as well as to answer the research questions relating to assessment of guidance and counselling services in the selected public secondary schools.

Table 1: Guidance and Counselling Services Available in Public Secondary Schools in Ogun State

S/N	Items	n	Responses (%)				Mean	S.D
			SD	D	A	SA		
1	The guidance and counselling unit provides academic counselling services to students.	300	13.3	9.0	63.0	14.7	2.79	.853
2	Career guidance services are provided to help students choose future occupations.	300	12.7	22.7	46.0	18.7	2.71	.915
3	Personal and social counselling services are available for students with emotional challenges.	300	0.0	16.7	57.7	25.7	3.09	.645
4	The counselling unit organizes orientation programmes for new students.	300	22.7	29.3	24.0	24.0	2.49	1.090
5	Information services on educational opportunities are provided by the counselling unit.	300	7.0	25.0	42.7	25.3	2.86	.876
6	The guidance unit provides referral services for students with serious personal problems.	300	16.0	21.0	48.0	15.0	2.62	.927
7	Counsellors organize group counselling sessions for students in the school.	300	7.0	26.3	34.0	32.7	2.92	.931
8	The counselling unit assists students in resolving behavioural and disciplinary issues.	300	17.7	0.0	39.3	43.0	3.08	1.065
9	Follow-up services are provided to monitor students' academic and personal progress.	300	11.3	21.7	33.0	34.0	2.90	1.001
10	The guidance and counselling unit provides vocational information and career awareness programmes.	300	3.7	16.7	35.7	44.0	3.20	.846

Note. n = number of respondent students sampled; S.D = Standard Deviation; SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree. Decision: Mean score > 2.50 is available service, while mean score < 2.50 is not available service.

3. Results

Research Question One: What are the guidance and counseling services in selected secondary schools in Ogun State?

Table 1 presents the responses of students on the availability of guidance and counselling services in public secondary schools in Ogun State. The findings revealed that most of the guidance and counselling services listed were available in the schools, as their mean scores were above the benchmark mean of 2.50. Specifically, vocational information and career awareness programmes recorded the highest mean score (Mean = 3.20), indicating that students strongly acknowledged the availability of career-related services in their schools. Personal and social counselling services for students with emotional challenges (Mean = 3.09), assistance in resolving behavioural and disciplinary issues (Mean = 3.08), group counselling sessions (Mean = 2.92), follow-up services to monitor students' progress (Mean = 2.90), and information services on educational opportunities (Mean = 2.86) were also perceived as available. In addition, academic counselling services (Mean = 2.79), career guidance services (Mean = 2.71), and referral services for students with serious personal problems (Mean = 2.62) were rated positively by the respondents. However, orientation programmes for new students recorded a mean score of 2.49, which fell slightly below the criterion mean, indicating that such services were not adequately available in the schools sampled.

Research Question Two: What are the impacts of guidance and counseling services in selected secondary schools in Ogun State?

The responses of students on the impacts of guidance and counselling services in public secondary schools in Ogun State are shown in Table 2. The findings revealed that guidance and counselling services had positive effects on students in most of the areas assessed, as the majority of the items recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50. The result indicated that guidance and counselling services improved the academic performance of students with the highest mean score of 3.27, showing that students strongly perceived counselling services as helpful to their academic success. In addition, guidance and counselling services helped students in their personal and academic development (Mean = 3.14), helped students to develop positive behaviour (Mean = 3.07), helped students to manage emotional challenges (Mean = 3.03) and contributed to the peace of the school environment (Mean = 2.98). The findings also showed that counselling services reduced indiscipline among students (Mean = 2.85), encouraged good study habits (Mean = 2.80), enabled students to have a healthy relationship with others (Mean = 2.80) and helped students to make better career choices (Mean = 2.71). However, the item on enhancing students' self-confidence and self-esteem got a mean score of 2.43 which was below the benchmark mean showing that guidance and counselling services had relatively low impact in this aspect.

Table 2: Impacts of Guidance and Counselling Services on Students in Public Secondary Schools in Ogun State

S/N	Items	n	Responses (%)				Mean	S.D
			SD	D	A	SA		
1	Guidance and counselling services have improved students' academic performance in my school.	300	3.3	14.0	35.0	47.7	3.27	.824
2	Guidance and counselling services help students develop positive behaviour.	300	5.3	19.0	38.7	37.0	3.07	.878
3	Counselling services have reduced cases of indiscipline among students.	300	10.3	12.3	59.3	18.0	2.85	.835
4	Guidance and counselling services help students make better career choices.	300	11.3	23.7	48.0	17.0	2.71	.881
5	Students who receive counselling are better able to manage emotional challenges.	300	0.0	19.3	58.7	22.0	3.03	.643
6	Guidance and counselling services improve students' self-confidence and self-esteem.	300	24.0	28.7	27.3	20.0	2.43	1.063
7	Counselling programmes encourage students to develop better study habits.	300	9.0	27.0	39.0	25.0	2.80	.918
8	Guidance and counselling services help students build healthy relationships with others.	300	11.7	19.3	46.7	22.3	2.80	.919
9	Guidance and counselling services contribute to a more peaceful school environment.	300	6.3	21.0	40.7	32.0	2.98	.886
10	Guidance and counselling services positively influence students' personal and academic development.	300	16.0	0.0	37.7	46.3	3.14	1.042

Note. n = number of respondent students sampled; S.D = Standard Deviation; SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree. Decision: Mean score > 2.50 is high impact, while mean score < 2.50 is low impact.

Table 3: Challenges of Guidance and Counselling Services in Public Secondary Schools in Ogun State

S/N	Items	n	Responses (%)				Mean	S.D
			SD	D	A	SA		
1	There are inadequate qualified guidance counsellors in the school.	100	11.0	13.0	65.0	11.0	2.76	.793
2	Guidance and counselling units in schools lack sufficient funding.	100	13.0	25.0	44.0	18.0	2.67	.922
3	Students do not adequately utilize counselling services in the school.	100	0.0	16.0	60.0	24.0	3.08	.631
4	Lack of counselling facilities and materials affects the effectiveness of guidance services.	100	21.0	35.0	16.0	28.0	2.51	1.115
5	Heavy workload limits the effectiveness of guidance counsellors in schools.	100	5.0	26.0	44.0	25.0	2.89	.840
6	Some teachers and school administrators do not give adequate support to counselling programmes.	100	19.0	16.0	45.0	20.0	2.66	1.007
7	Students' negative attitudes toward counselling reduce the effectiveness of guidance services.	100	6.0	34.0	23.0	37.0	2.91	.975
8	Lack of privacy and confidentiality discourages students from seeking counselling services.	100	23.0	0.0	35.0	42.0	2.96	1.163
9	Guidance and counselling periods are not adequately included in the school timetable.	100	16.0	22.0	34.0	28.0	2.74	1.041
10	Insufficient training opportunities affect the professional competence of school counsellors.	100	6.0	23.0	30.0	41.0	3.06	.941

Note. n = number of respondent teachers sampled; S.D = Standard Deviation; SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree. Decision: Mean score > 2.50 is agreed, while mean score < 2.50 is disagreed.

Research Question Three: What are the challenges associated with counselling services in selected secondary schools in Ogun State?

Table 3: Teachers' responses on the challenges of guidance and counselling services in public secondary schools in Ogun State. The results indicated that all the identified items recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50, indicating that the respondents agreed that these factors constituted major challenges affecting the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in schools. Significantly, a high mean score of 3.08 was recorded for the inadequate use of counselling services by students, indicating that many students do not use the counselling services enough. The following were also identified as serious challenges; lack of training opportunities that affect the professional competence of school counsellors (Mean = 3.06), lack of privacy and confidentiality discouraging students to seek counselling services (Mean = 2.96), students' negative attitude to counselling (Mean = 2.91), and heavy workload that limits the effectiveness of counsellors (Mean = 2.89). The results also indicated that poor qualified guidance counsellors in schools (Mean = 2.76), poor inclusion of counselling periods in the school timetable (Mean = 2.74), poor funding of counselling units (Mean = 2.67) and lack of support from some teachers and schools administrators (Mean = 2.66) negatively affected counselling programmes. In addition, lack of counselling facilities and materials (Mean = 2.51) was also identified as a challenge but less than the other factors.

4. Discussion of Findings

The findings of research question one revealed that guidance and counselling services were generally available in public secondary schools in Ogun State, particularly in the areas of vocational information, career awareness, personal-social counselling, behavioural adjustment, and academic counselling. The high mean ratings recorded for services such as vocational guidance, emotional counselling, behavioural support, and group counselling suggest that counselling units in the sampled schools actively provide developmental and preventive services to students. This finding supports the study by Olamuyiwa (2025), who reported that guidance and counselling services in secondary schools significantly contribute to students' academic adjustment and personal development when effectively integrated into school programmes.

Similarly, the result aligns with Adama and Ukoima (2024), who found that information services, referral services, and appraisal services positively influence students' career choices and educational development in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The present finding also corroborates Orewere et al. (2020), who observed that counselling services in secondary schools play important roles in helping students make informed career decisions and cope with educational challenges. In the same vein, the finding agrees with the framework

proposed by recent scholars who emphasized that comprehensive counselling programmes involving academic, vocational, personal-social, preventive, and remedial services are essential for students' holistic development and emotional well-being in schools. However, the finding that orientation programmes for new students were not adequately available contradicts the expectation of a comprehensive school counselling framework as recommended by recent educational counselling reforms, which advocate structured orientation and transition support for students entering new school environments. Recent educational initiatives such as the counselling hub-and-spoke model and mandatory counselling structures introduced in some educational systems further stress the importance of orientation, psychological support, and career guidance as integral components of effective school counselling programmes. Therefore, the current study demonstrates that although guidance and counselling services are largely available in the sampled schools, there is still a need for schools to strengthen orientation services and institutionalize more comprehensive counselling programmes that adequately support students' academic, career, emotional, and social adjustment.

The findings of research question two revealed that guidance and counselling services had significant positive impacts on students in public secondary schools in Ogun State, particularly in the areas of academic performance, behavioural adjustment, emotional stability, career development, study habits, and interpersonal relationships. The high mean scores recorded for improved academic performance, positive behavioural development, peaceful school environment, and students' personal and academic development indicate that counselling services contribute substantially to students' overall growth and adjustment in school. This finding supports the study of Yusuf and Alonge (2023), who found that effective school guidance and counselling programmes enhance students' academic achievement and behavioural discipline by helping learners cope with academic and personal challenges. The result also agrees with Eremie and Jackson (2022), who reported that counselling services significantly improve students' emotional well-being, social adjustment, and career decision-making abilities in secondary schools. Similarly, the finding corroborates the study of Nwankwo and Okeke (2024), who observed that guidance and counselling services promote healthy interpersonal relationships, reduce indiscipline, and encourage positive study habits among adolescents in Nigerian secondary schools. Furthermore, the present finding aligns with the submission of Akinade (2021), who emphasized that comprehensive counselling programmes contribute to students' holistic development by fostering self-awareness, academic motivation, emotional resilience, and responsible behaviour. The finding is equally consistent with global educational counselling perspectives, which stress that counselling

interventions help students build confidence, improve school adjustment, and maintain psychological balance necessary for academic success and social integration. However, the current finding that guidance and counselling services had relatively low impact on students' self-confidence and self-esteem contradicts the findings of Odebunmi and Balogun (2022), who reported that counselling interventions significantly improve students' self-worth and confidence levels when properly implemented and supported by trained counsellors. The contradiction may be attributed to inadequate counselling resources, insufficient professional counsellors, or limited individualized counselling sessions in the sampled schools. Therefore, the present study suggests that while guidance and counselling services positively influence many aspects of students' academic and social development, greater attention should be given to strengthening programmes that directly enhance students' self-esteem, confidence, and personal identity formation in secondary schools.

The findings of research question three revealed that several challenges hinder the effective delivery and utilization of guidance and counselling services in public secondary schools in Ogun State. The study showed that inadequate utilization of counselling services by students, insufficient training opportunities for counsellors, lack of privacy and confidentiality, students' negative attitudes toward counselling, and heavy workload on counsellors were among the major challenges affecting counselling effectiveness in schools. This finding supports the study of Adebowale and Alao (2023), who found that guidance and counselling services in Nigerian secondary schools are often constrained by poor student participation, inadequate professional development opportunities, and insufficient institutional support. The present result also agrees with the findings of Eyo and Joshua (2022), who reported that shortage of qualified counsellors, excessive workload, and lack of counselling facilities significantly reduce the efficiency of counselling programmes in public schools. Similarly, the finding corroborates the submission of Ndirangu and Mwangi (2024), who observed that lack of confidentiality and students' fear of stigmatization discourage many learners from seeking counselling assistance despite their emotional and academic needs.

Furthermore, the current finding aligns with the work of Afolabi and Ibitoye (2021), who emphasized that inadequate funding, poor scheduling of counselling activities in school timetables, and weak administrative support negatively affect the implementation of effective counselling services in secondary schools. The finding is also consistent with recent global counselling perspectives which maintain that school counselling programmes require adequate personnel, professional training, supportive school policies, and confidential counselling environments to function effectively and gain students' trust. However, the current finding slightly contradicts the position of Okoli and Eze (2023), who reported that increasing awareness

campaigns and counselling advocacy programmes in some schools have improved students' attitudes toward counselling services and encouraged greater participation among adolescents. The contradiction may be attributed to differences in school environments, level of counselling awareness, and availability of trained counsellors across regions.

Therefore, the present study indicates that although guidance and counselling services are valuable in schools, their effectiveness in Ogun State public secondary schools is limited by institutional, professional, attitudinal, and infrastructural challenges that require urgent educational policy attention and administrative intervention.

5. Conclusion

The study concluded that guidance and counselling services are generally available in public secondary schools in Ogun State and play important roles in supporting students' academic, vocational, personal, and social development. The findings established that counselling units in the sampled schools provide various essential services, including academic counselling, career guidance, vocational awareness programmes, behavioural adjustment support, emotional counselling, referral services, and group counselling sessions. These services were perceived by students as contributing positively to their academic performance, study habits, career decision-making, emotional stability, interpersonal relationships, discipline, and overall personal development. The study further established that guidance and counselling services contribute to creating a more peaceful and conducive school environment by helping students manage emotional and behavioural challenges effectively. However, the findings also revealed that some aspects of counselling services, particularly orientation programmes for newly admitted students and efforts aimed at improving students' self-confidence and self-esteem, were not adequately effective and therefore require further strengthening.

The study further concluded that despite the recognised benefits and positive impacts of guidance and counselling services in schools, several challenges continue to hinder their effective implementation and utilisation in public secondary schools in Ogun State. Major challenges identified include inadequate qualified counsellors, insufficient funding, lack of counselling facilities and materials, poor inclusion of counselling activities in school timetables, heavy workload on counsellors, inadequate professional training opportunities, lack of privacy and confidentiality, negative attitudes of students toward counselling, and insufficient support from some teachers and school administrators. The low utilisation of counselling services by students also emerged as a significant concern affecting the effectiveness of school counselling programmes.

Consequently, the study concluded that although guidance and counselling services remain essential

tools for promoting students' academic success, emotional well-being, and behavioural adjustment, there is a strong need for educational stakeholders and school authorities to provide greater institutional, financial, professional, and infrastructural support to improve the quality, accessibility, and effectiveness of counselling services in public secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. School counsellors should sustain and further strengthen the available guidance and counseling services through regular counselling programmes by placing greater emphasis on organising orientation programmes for newly admitted students to help them adjust quickly to the school environment.
2. School counsellors should intensify efforts toward delivering individualized counselling interventions that address students' academic, emotional, social, and psychological needs by organising regular workshops, motivational sessions, self-development programmes, and confidence-building activities aimed at improving self-esteem and self-confidence.
3. School counsellors should actively advocate for improved administrative support and adopt strategies that enhance students' trust and participation in counselling programmes by maintaining strict confidentiality, create welcoming and private counselling environments, and conduct awareness campaigns to reduce misconceptions and negative attitudes toward counselling services among students.

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