

EFFECT OF APPRAISAL COUNSELLING SERVICES ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND THE CHALLENGES OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of appraisal counselling services on students' academic performance and the factors that militate against guidance and counselling in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population size of this study comprised of all the teacher counselors in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The sample of this study comprised of 28 teacher counsellors and 140 students from public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The instrument used for data collection was a self-developed questionnaire titled: "Guidance and Counselling and Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (GCSAPQ). The instrument was validated by the researcher's supervisor for observation and content modification. The reliability of the instrument correlated using Cronbach Alpha Correlation Coefficient and a reliability index of .811 was realised. Mean and standard deviation analysis were used in answering the research questions, while ANOVA associated with simple regression was employed in testing the hypothesis formulated for the study at .05 level of significance with the aid of the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28. Findings revealed that effective appraisal counselling significantly contributes to improved academic performance when adequately implemented because it helps students align their abilities with realistic educational goals. However, the prevailing challenges have limited its full impact in many secondary schools across Rivers State. The study therefore recommended that the recruitment of more professional counsellors, provision of adequate funds and facilities, regular training workshops, and stronger policy enforcement by educational authorities. Strengthening guidance and counselling services will enhance students' academic outcomes and promote holistic educational development in Rivers State.

Keywords: Appraisal Counselling, Academic Performance, Guidance and Counselling, Secondary Schools, Rivers State, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary educational landscape, guidance and counselling have emerged as integral components of effective school administration and student development. The dynamic nature of the educational system in Nigeria, coupled with increasing academic, social, and psychological pressures on students, has underscored the importance of counselling services in secondary schools. Among the various types of counselling, appraisal counselling plays a central role in helping students understand themselves, their abilities, interests, and potentials in relation to academic performance and career goals (Okorodudu, 2017). It provides systematic methods for gathering and interpreting information about learners, enabling counsellors to offer appropriate guidance and interventions.

Appraisal counselling services involve the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data about students through psychological tests, inventories, interviews, and cumulative records. These data help counsellors and teachers understand each student's strengths, weaknesses, aptitudes, interests, and personality traits (Egbule, 2019). The identification of these individual characteristics enables appraisal counselling to develop and tailor educational plans that promote effective learning and academic achievement. According to Egbochukwu (2018), appraisal counselling assists students in making realistic educational and vocational choices by helping them match their abilities and interests with appropriate opportunities. In Rivers State, where secondary school education serves as a bridge between foundational learning and tertiary education, effective appraisal counselling can significantly enhance students' academic performance and readiness for higher education or career pursuits.

Despite the growing recognition of its importance, the implementation of guidance and counselling services in many Nigerian secondary schools remains inadequate. In Rivers State, various challenges like shortage of qualified counsellors, lack of facilities, heavy workload on teachers, and insufficient government support have hindered the effectiveness of guidance programmes (Ololube, 2017). Many schools either lack full-time trained counsellors or have counsellors who perform multiple administrative and teaching duties, thereby limiting their capacity to deliver comprehensive counselling services. Consequently, students often fail to receive timely guidance that could help them overcome academic challenges and make informed life decisions.

The effect of appraisal counselling on academic performance of students is particularly relevant in this context because when students understand their learning styles, capabilities, and limitations, they tend to adopt more effective study habits for realistic academic goals (Okoye & Nwamuo, 2019). Appraisal counselling also promotes self-awareness and motivation, which are most critical for academic success. In addition, it helps in diagnosing learning difficulties, identification of gifted students and provision of remedial strategies for those with academic challenges. In the absence of these services, students may experience confusion, low self-esteem, and poor decision-making, all of which contribute to underachievement and maladjustment in the school settings.

However, the delivery of effective appraisal counselling services faces numerous obstacles like the lack of standardized assessment tools, inadequate funding and poor recognition of counselling roles in schools, which continue to impede progress (Adegoke, 2018). Also, the cultural perception of counselling as a remedial service for problematic students discourages many from seeking help. Parents and teachers that are critical stakeholders in the educational process often misunderstand the objectives of guidance and counselling, which helps in limiting

collaboration and support for counsellors. The result is a fragmented system that undermines the potential benefits of appraisal counselling in enhancing students' academic outcomes.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to bridge the gap between policy and practice in the provision of counselling services. This study will highlight its role in improving students' self-understanding, motivation, and achievement levels by evaluating the impact of appraisal counselling on academic performance. Furthermore, the identification of the challenges faced by counsellors will guide educational planners, administrators, and policymakers in designing appropriate strategies for effective counselling service delivery (Ololube, 2017). This study will contribute to the broader goal of understanding and achieving a holistic student development and improved educational outcomes in Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

Guidance and counselling services are essential components of the Nigerian educational system, particularly in secondary schools where students face critical developmental and academic decisions. Among these services, appraisal counselling is vital in helping learners understand their abilities, interests, and limitations, thereby guiding them toward effective learning and career choices.

However, despite the establishment of guidance and counselling units in many secondary schools in Rivers State, students' academic performance remains below expectation. Many students still struggle with poor study habits, low motivation, and inappropriate subject or career choices, indicating that appraisal counselling services are either underutilized or ineffectively implemented.

The effectiveness of guidance and counselling in the state's schools is hindered by several factors, including inadequate numbers of qualified counsellors, poor funding, lack of counselling materials, and insufficient administrative support. In many cases, teachers who are not professionally trained in counselling are assigned counselling roles, reducing the quality of service delivery. Furthermore, cultural misconceptions about counselling believe that it is meant only for students with behavioural problems discourage many learners from seeking professional guidance.

These limitations undermine the objectives of counselling programmes and contribute to persistent cases of underachievement among students. Consequently, there is a growing need to examine how appraisal counselling services influence students' academic performance and to identify the major factors hindering effective guidance and counselling practices in secondary schools in Rivers State. This study therefore sought to address these issues and provide insights towards improving counselling services for better educational outcomes.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of appraisal counselling services on students' academic performance and the challenges of guidance and counselling in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study is designed to:

- Investigate the effect of appraisal counselling services on academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria.

- Determine the factors militate against guidance and counselling in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated to guide the study:

- How does appraisal counselling service affect academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria?
- What are the factors militate against guidance and counselling in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

One hypothesis further guided the study:

- Appraisal counselling service does not significantly affect academic performance of secondary school students Rivers State.

CONCEPTUALISATION

Effect of Appraisal Counselling Services on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students

Appraisal counselling services constitute one of the most vital components of the guidance and counselling programme in the school system. These services involve the systematic collection, evaluation, and interpretation of data about students to help them understand themselves and make informed academic, vocational, and personal decisions (Egbochukwu, 2018). In the context of secondary education, particularly in Rivers State, appraisal counselling plays a crucial role in enhancing students' academic performance by promoting self-awareness, improving learning strategies, and guiding educational choices that align with individual abilities and career aspirations.

Appraisal counselling helps students to identify their strengths, weaknesses, interests, aptitudes, and personalities, which are necessary for making realistic academic decisions. Through tools such as aptitude tests, achievement tests, intelligence assessments, interest inventories, and interviews, counsellors gather valuable data to evaluate each learner's potential (Okorodudu, 2017). When properly analyzed, these data enable counsellors to provide individualized guidance that supports better academic performance. For instance, a student who performs poorly in mathematics but excels in language arts can be guided toward subjects and study areas that suit their strengths, thereby improving motivation and achievement.

In Rivers State, where students face numerous challenges such as examination anxiety, poor study habits, low academic motivation, and inadequate learning environments, appraisal counselling offers a strategic intervention. Helping students understand their cognitive and emotional capacities, helps counsellors to develop personalized learning strategies that enhance academic outcomes. According to Okoye and Nwamuo (2019), appraisal counselling helps students set realistic academic goals and adopt effective study methods tailored to their learning

styles. This self-awareness fosters confidence, reduces stress, and increases commitment to learning, which are essential for academic success.

Appraisal counselling also plays a preventive and corrective role in addressing learning difficulties. Counsellors can identify students with academic or emotional challenges early through diagnostic assessments and provide remedial support or referrals to appropriate professionals (Egbule, 2019). This proactive approach prevents academic failure and ensures that struggling students receive timely assistance. In many cases, poor academic performance in secondary schools results from unrecognized learning disabilities or misaligned study patterns, both of which can be mitigated through effective appraisal counselling.

Moreover, appraisal counselling supports teachers and administrators in planning instructional strategies and classroom interventions. When counsellors share assessment data with teachers, it enhances understanding of students' individual needs and learning preferences. Teachers can then differentiate instruction, adopt varied teaching methods, and provide targeted support to improve academic outcomes. To Ololube (2017), appraisal counselling encourages collaboration between counsellors and teachers, thereby integrating psychological insight into the teaching-learning process. This holistic approach promotes not only academic achievement but also the emotional and social stability necessary for sustained learning.

However, the effectiveness of appraisal counselling services in improving academic performance depends largely on the availability of trained counsellors, adequate resources, and institutional support. In Rivers State, many secondary schools face challenges such as lack of qualified counsellors, insufficient assessment tools, and limited awareness among students about the benefits of counselling. These constraints often limit the scope and quality of appraisal services provided in schools (Adegoke, 2018). Without consistent appraisal and follow-up, students may continue to make uninformed decisions about their academic pursuits, leading to poor performance and low self-esteem.

Despite these challenges, research evidence suggests that when properly implemented, appraisal counselling has a significant positive impact on students' academic performance. It enhances goal-setting behaviour, promotes effective study skills, and helps students develop realistic academic and career expectations (Egbochukwu, 2018; Okoye & Nwamuo, 2019). Students who participate actively in appraisal counselling are often more self-disciplined, confident, and motivated to achieve academic success.

Factors that Militate Against Guidance and Counselling in Secondary Schools

Guidance and counselling are essential for the educational, vocational, and personal development of students in secondary schools. These services are designed to assist learners in making informed choices, overcoming challenges, and achieving academic and social adjustment. In Rivers State, guidance and counselling programmes were established to help students manage academic stress and prepare for future careers. However, their effectiveness has been limited by a range of challenges that hinder their proper implementation and utilization (Afolayan, 2021; Eze, 2020).

A major factor militate against effective counselling in secondary schools is the shortage of professionally trained counselors (Tucker et al., 2006; Ugochukwu, 2023; Umoh 2008). Many schools either lack qualified counsellors or rely on teachers without professional training in counselling. This situation reduces the quality of counselling services and denies students access to professional guidance. In some instances, a single counsellor is assigned to several schools,

making it difficult to offer individualized support (Ugochukwu, 2023). Without adequately trained personnel, students' emotional, academic, and social needs remain unattended, which undermines the objectives of counselling.

Inadequate funding also poses a serious challenge. Counselling services require financial resources for assessment materials, record-keeping tools, and private counselling offices. However, in many public secondary schools in Rivers State, the guidance and counselling units are poorly funded. Limited financial support makes it difficult for counsellors to organize career talks, workshops, or testing sessions that enhance students' self-awareness and academic planning (Ibrahim & Olatunji, 2022). This lack of funding has made most counselling programmes ineffective and poorly structured.

Similarly, the absence of adequate facilities and materials hinders effective counselling delivery. Most schools lack designated offices for counsellors, resulting in a lack of privacy and confidentiality during counselling sessions. In addition, Eze (2020) observed that schools often do not possess the necessary psychological tests, interest inventories, and career guidance resources that aid accurate assessment of students' needs. Consequently, counsellors are forced to rely on informal observations or teacher reports, which limit the effectiveness of the services provided.

Poor administrative support from school authorities is another major hindrance to guidance and counselling effectiveness. According to Afolayan (2021), in many schools, administrators do not recognize the importance of counselling or integrate it into the school's overall development plan. Counsellors are frequently assigned non-counselling responsibilities such as teaching or administrative duties, which distract them from their professional functions. Furthermore, there is limited supervision from educational authorities, and the enforcement of policies relating to guidance and counselling remains weak (Oluwole, 2021).

The excessive workload on teachers, who often double as counsellors, also contributes to the ineffectiveness of counselling services. Because of the shortage of trained counsellors, teachers are assigned additional counselling duties despite their heavy teaching schedules. This dual responsibility leaves little time for proper counselling sessions, follow-up activities, or documentation (Ibrahim & Olatunji, 2022). As a result, counselling becomes irregular and inconsistent, depriving students of essential guidance.

Negative attitudes and misconceptions about counselling among students, parents, and even teachers further limit its success. To Ugochukwu (2023), many people perceive counselling as a service meant only for students with behavioural or psychological problems rather than as a developmental and preventive programme for all learners. Consequently, many students are reluctant to approach counsellors, and parents often discourage their children from participating in counselling activities due to cultural beliefs and ignorance.

Equally, Oluwole (2021) noted that the poor awareness and inadequate policy implementation have weakened the effectiveness of guidance and counselling in Rivers State. Although the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) mandated the inclusion of guidance and counselling in schools, enforcement remains poor. Ololube (2017) stated that many school administrators fail to comply with policy guidelines regarding the employment of counsellors and establishment of functional counselling units. This is accompanied by the limited awareness campaigns and public education, which means that students and parents do not fully appreciate the value of counselling services.

METHODS

This research adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design was chosen because of the objectives and nature of data collected. The research design adopted is described as going back to one's research questions and thinking about what one is hoping to do with the data collected in order to be able to address those research questions (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

The population size of this study comprised of all the teacher counselors in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Krieger (2012) defined population as all members of any well-defined class of people, events or objects. This implies that any entity, group or set which constitutes a population must have at least one attribute or characteristic which is common to all of them. The population of this study therefore represents the target of the study as defined by the aims and objectives.

The sample of this study comprised of 28 teacher counsellors from public secondary schools in Rivers State. Teacher counsellors were included in the sample because they have relevant and reliable information about students' academic performance in schools, as well as the skill they possess in guiding and counselling students. A stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting the teachers (respondents) for study. They were stratified based on the three senatorial zones, which comprised 'Rivers East, Rivers West and Rivers South-East'. From each of the zones, part of the population were sampled using simple random sampling technique by balloting. Stratified random sampling was used to select schools because the researcher took into consideration the heterogeneous nature of the population to be sampled (Amin, 2011). This procedure was relevant for the study because it helped to reduce chance variation between a sample and the population it represents.

Students of the senior secondary school students were also part of the study because they are the group of persons that benefits directly from guidance and counselling. Also, it is because the guidance and counselling practices by teachers are well known to them, especially as it relates to how it affects their academic performance. Ten (10) students were chosen from each of the fourteen (14) randomly selected schools, therefore, the study dealt with 140 students.

Research participants were given an invitation letter informing them of the researcher's intention to conduct a research study and inviting them to participate. They replied in writing confirming their decision about whether or not they want to participate in the research. Participants who have volunteered to take part in this research were given a briefing note. This briefing note stated the summary and purpose of the research study. The purpose was to ensure that the participants have an idea of what is being studied and prepare to fill out the questionnaires.

The instrument used for data collection was a self-developed questionnaire titled: "Guidance and Counselling and Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (GCSAPQ). The instruments were divided into two sections. Section 'A' was used to gather the demographic data of the respondents, while section 'B' addressed issues relating to research questions and hypotheses of the study. The responses on section B was patterned after a modified four point likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) rated 4, 3, 2, and 1.

The instrument was validated by the researcher's supervisor for observation and content modification. The quality and relevance of the items, including appropriateness, clarity and sufficiency of the instrument for collecting required responses from the respondents was scrutinized. All inputs such as corrections or comments from the supervisor were built into final

draft of the questionnaire. The researcher also cross checked the items with the research questions to ensure that the instruments were adequate for the study.

To determine the reliability of the instrument, the researcher carried out a pilot study that preceded the primary research that was used to ascertain the reliability of the research instruments. This was done by administering thirty (30) copies of the questionnaire instruments to teacher counsellors and students of the selected public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria who were not part of the sample but were part of the population. The copies were retrieved and correlated using Cronbach Alpha Correlation Coefficient. As such a reliability index of .811 was realised. Frequencies, charts and simple percentages were used to analyse the demographic data of the respondents. Mean and standard deviation analysis were used in answering the research questions, while ANOVA associated with simple regression was employed in testing the hypothesis formulated for the study at .05 level of significance. This was done using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28.

RESULTS

Answer to Research Questions

Research Question One: How does appraisal counselling service affect academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation on the extent appraisal counselling service affect academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria

S/N	Items	Teacher Counsellors		Students		Weighted Mean	Remark
		Mean	SD.	Mean	SD.		
1.	Appraisal counselling leads students to greater self-efficacy	3.25	0.70	3.18	0.61	3.22	Agree
2.	Appraisal counselling improves students perception	3.11	0.83	3.32	0.48	3.22	Agree
3.	This counselling service helps develop self-motivation technique	3.18	0.72	3.11	0.69	3.15	Agree
4.	Appraisal counselling helps students handle personal challenges that can affect their academics	3.43	0.69	3.29	0.60	3.36	Agree
5.	This counselling service helps students to be academically stable	3.29	0.71	3.50	0.64	3.40	Agree
Grand mean		3.25	0.73	3.28	0.60	3.27	Agree

Data on Table 1 shows that all the items had weighted mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50 and were perceived as the extent appraisal counselling service affect academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria. In summary, with an aggregate weighted mean of 3.27 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, the respondents agreed to a high extent that appraisal counselling leads students to greater self-efficacy, appraisal counselling improves students perception, appraisal counselling service helps develop self-motivation technique, appraisal counselling helps students handle personal challenges that can affect their academics and appraisal counselling service helps students to be academically stable.

Research Question Two: What are the factors militate against guidance and counselling in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the factors militating against guidance and counselling in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

S/N	Items	Teacher Counsellors		Students		Weighted Mean	Remark
		Mean	SD.	Mean	SD.		
6.	Lack of Specific time allocated for counselling students	3.11	0.83	3.04	1.07	3.08	Agree
7.	There are no adequate resources and facilities in schools to encourage guidance & counselling sessions	3.04	0.69	3.25	0.95	3.15	Agree
8.	Teachers have excess workload that impedes counselling in schools	3.07	0.86	3.36	0.68	3.22	Agree
9.	There are inadequate trained teacher counsellors in schools	3.18	0.67	3.21	0.69	3.20	Agree
10.	Unwillingness of students to seek for guidance and counselling	3.00	0.86	3.25	0.59	3.13	Agree
Grand mean		3.08	0.78	3.22	0.80	3.16	Agree

Data on Table 2 shows that all the items had weighted mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50 and were perceived as the factors militating against guidance and counselling in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. In summary, with an aggregate weighted mean of 3.16 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, the respondents agreed that lack of Specific time allocated for counselling students, there are no adequate resources and facilities in schools to encourage guidance & counselling sessions, teachers have excess workload that impedes counselling in schools, there are inadequate trained teacher counsellors in schools and unwillingness of students to seek for guidance and counselling are the factors militating against guidance and counselling in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

Test of Hypothesis

HO₁: Appraisal counselling service does not significantly affect academic performance of secondary school students Rivers State, Nigeria

Table 3: Summary of One Way ANOVA Analysis on the effect of appraisal counselling service on academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	411.464	3	137.155	4.963	.008
Within Groups	663.214	24	27.634		
Total	1074.679	27			

Table 3 revealed the analysis of variance on the effect of appraisal counselling service on academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria, which yielded a mean square of 137.115 (between groups) and 27.634 (within groups). This produced an F-value of 4.963 which has a sig value at 0.008(2-tailed). Since the significance value is less than 0.05 alpha value used for the test, a significant effect exists. The researcher rejected the null

hypothesis, and concluded that appraisal counselling service significantly affect academic performance of secondary school students Rivers State, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Effect of Appraisal Counselling Service on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students

From the study, the respondents agreed to an extent that appraisal counselling service that appraisal counselling leads students to greater self-efficacy, appraisal counselling improves students perception, appraisal counselling service helps develop self-motivation technique, appraisal counselling helps students handle personal challenges that can affect their academics and appraisal counselling service helps students to be academically stable. Also, teacher counsellors monitor and track student academic progress; teacher counsellors encourage and support students to work hard in all subject areas. Furthermore, appraisal counselling service significantly affects academic performance of secondary school students Rivers State, Nigeria. This was supported by Adefila (2009) as he noted that in the appraisal of an individual the result of the assessment of several relevant characteristics of the person (student) is arrived at. The collection of data, analysis of subjective and objective personal and psychological data about a student is involved, which gives a full understanding of these students and how they can be helped.

Atsuwe and Achegbulu (2018) examined influence of guidance and counselling programme on the academic performance of secondary school students in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria. The study established the following findings: Secondary schools in the study area differed in the number of guidance and counselling services that they offer. Teacher counsellors had little training in guidance and counselling while Stakeholders adequately supported guidance and counselling programme in the schools. This implies that various secondary schools employ counselling service that benefits them most and the involvement of educational stakeholders will promotes the practice of guidance and counselling in schools. In a similar study, Bolu-Steve and Oredugba (2017) examined influence of counseling services on perceived academic performance of secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria. At the first stage, the researchers purposively selected Ikorodu L.G.A in Lagos State, Nigeria. The findings of this study revealed that there was no significant difference on the basis of age, class level and school type. However a significant difference was found on the basis of respondent's religion, gender and the number of times the students visited the counsellor. This implies that the relevance of counselling services is applicable to any school respective of location.

Ondima et al. (2013) determined effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Programme in enhancing students' academic, career and personal competencies: A Case of Secondary Schools in Nyamira District, Kenya. All the respondents who participated in the study perceived school guidance and counselling programme as effective in enhancing students' academic, career and personal competencies. The implication is that the more attention is given to the practice of guidance and counselling, the better the academic performance of students. This agrees with the present study. On the contrary, Eremie and Jackson (2019) examined the Influence of Guidance and Counseling Services on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Rivers State. The findings revealed that appraisal and orientation services do not influence students'

academic performance. Although, this deduction does not agree with the present study but, the constant improvement of counselling in schools can go a long way in increasing students' interest towards guidance and counselling.

Factors that Militate Against Guidance and Counselling in Secondary Schools

From the study, the respondents agreed that lack of Specific time allocated for counselling students, there are no adequate resources and facilities in schools to encourage guidance & counselling sessions, teachers have excess workload that impedes counselling in schools, there are inadequate trained teacher counsellors in schools and unwillingness of students to seek for guidance and counselling are the factors militating against guidance and counselling in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. This is agreed by Ugochuckwu (2023) observing that guidance and counselling programme has not been effective in the country because the teacher providers have a heavy workload. This is because, of the busy schedule, many students regards and perceive the teacher counsellor as a teacher first then a counsellor.

Tucker et al. (2006) and Umoh (2008) said the ratio, as at 1980 was 1:800. The situation could be worse. This is because the limited members of trained counsellors are moving out of school settings into non-school settings. In other words, a typical school with a population of 1,000 students is expected to have four counsellors; now such a school either has none or at best only one. This poor counsellor-student ratio does not encourage the growth of guidance counselling in such schools. These assertions agree with the findings of the present study. This implies that when there are more human resources (teacher counsellors) in schools, it will encourage as well as increase guidance and counselling services in secondary schools. Idowu (2008) and Oluwole (2021) emphasized the inability of both state and federal government in Nigeria to stretch their budgets with extra demands from an emerging unit such as guidance and counselling. Implying that financial constraints pose a challenge to the practice of guidance and counselling and, this concurs to the findings of the present study.

CONCLUSION

Considering the findings obtained in this study it is concluded that there is no guidance and counselling services that are not of importance in secondary school education. The emphasis placed on guidance and counseling in the schools is such that teachers see it as their duty to enlighten the students about requirements and condition of success, advantages and disadvantages, opportunities and prospects in the different fields of endeavor. It was noted that counselling practices assist students at various forms at becoming fully acquainted with various occupational and educational opportunities that is at their disposal, as well as helps to advance and maintain good interpersonal relationship among students, which will encourage decent behaviour. When teachers counsellors implements all the guidance and counselling services needed, students' academic outcome will be improved. Moreover, Teacher counsellors had small training in guidance and counselling while educational stakeholders adequately supported guidance and counselling programme in public schools. When various secondary schools employ counselling service that benefits them most with the involvement of educational stakeholders, it will promotes the practice of guidance and counselling in schools. Furthermore, due to teacher's being engaged in heavy workload, which makes them have busy schedule, many students regards and perceive the teacher counsellor as a teacher first then a counsellor.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, it is recommended that:

- Government should recruit of more professional counsellors, provide of adequate funds and facilities, regular training workshops, and stronger policy enforcement by educational authorities.
- Government should encourage and strengthening guidance and counselling services to enhance students' academic outcomes and promote holistic educational development in Rivers State.

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