

IMPACT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES ON FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of guidance and counselling services on functional education for sustainable national development in secondary schools in Katsina state, Nigeria. Anchored on Carl Rogers' Person-Centred Theory and the Systems Theory Framework, the research adopts a descriptive survey design involving a targeted population of 365 teachers and surveys 186 respondents from six selected public senior secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma zonal education quality assurance, Katsina state, Nigeria, through stratified and simple random sampling techniques. A self-designed and experts validated questionnaire titled "Guidance and Counselling Services for Enhanced Functional Education Questionnaire (GCSEFEQ)," which had a Cronbach's coefficient of $\alpha = 0.81$ was used as the instrument for data collection. The hypothesis was tested using t-test for independent samples. Findings of the study revealed a significant difference in the views of male and female teachers concerning guidance services, while no differences were found regarding appraisal and placement services. Notably, significant differences were identified based on school location, although referral and follow-up services showed no substantial differences among the schools. Similarly, the study findings reveal a p-value of 0.000 to 0.10 showing that guidance and counselling services improved performance of students' academic, vocational, and psychosocial development, while their implementation is hindered by inadequate personnel, poor infrastructure, and limited awareness. The study recommends systemic investment in counselling infrastructure and professional development to enhance the role of guidance services in achieving sustainable development.

Keywords: Guidance and Counselling; Functional Education; Sustainable Development

Introduction

The pursuit of functional education, an approach that equips learners with practical, life-oriented skills necessary for sustainable development is increasingly undermined by insufficient access to effective guidance and counselling services in secondary schools. As education systems worldwide emphasize holistic student development, the role of counselling

becomes pivotal not only for academic support but also for nurturing career readiness, emotional intelligence, and civic responsibility. However, the state witnesses' disparities in service delivery, especially across gender lines and between urban and rural locations, raise concerns about equity and impact. This study investigates how guidance and counselling services influence the realization of functional education goals in the region, drawing insights from both teachers and students as key stakeholders.

Education remains the cornerstone of national development, catalyzing economic growth, social transformation, and environmental sustainability. In the 21st century, functional education defined as equipping learners with practical knowledge, life skills, and values has gained prominence as a strategic tool for achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4: Quality Education (Nyamboga, 2024). Emphasizing relevance, adaptability, and empowerment, functional education enables learners to become self-reliant, socially responsible, and economically productive citizens.

In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education as stated by Ikpuri (2018), underscores the importance of guidance and counselling services as integral components of the educational system. These services are designed to support students in navigating academic challenges, making informed career choices, and developing emotional resilience. However, despite policy provisions, the implementation of guidance and counselling programmes in many public secondary schools, especially in northern states like Katsina, remains inconsistent and under-resourced.

Katsina state, with its diverse socio-economic landscape and educational disparities, presents a compelling case for examining the role of guidance and counselling in fostering functional education. Many students in the region face challenges such as limited access to career information, socio-cultural pressures, and psychological stressors that hinder their academic and personal development. In this context, guidance and counselling services can serve as a transformative force, helping students discover their potential, align their aspirations with societal needs, and contribute meaningfully to sustainable development. This study, therefore, seeks to explore the influence of guidance and counselling services on functional education for sustainable development among secondary school students in Katsina State. It aims to bridge the gap between policy and practice by assessing the availability, effectiveness, and impact of these services on students' academic, vocational, and psychosocial outcomes.

Guidance and counselling are essential for enhancing functional education and play a vital role in achieving sustainable national security and development. These programs equip individuals with the necessary skills and values for peaceful coexistence and responsible citizenship, thereby fostering a strong sense of community and national unity. Such cohesion not only fortifies the social fabric but also serves as a safeguard against conflict, leading to a more secure and prosperous nation. According to Šteh et al (2023), guidance and counselling represent a structured, impactful intervention within the educational system aimed at driving the

comprehensive development of students across personal, social, career, emotional, and academic dimensions.

In public senior secondary schools, guidance and counselling provide a systematic and organized educational support service, delivered by skilled, professionals, trained counsellors or teachers within the school environment. The primary goal is to empower students to understand themselves, their circumstances, and their surroundings, while uncovering their interests and potential. It is imperative that they learn to leverage their strengths and address their weaknesses to lead highly productive lives (Slijepčević, 2021).

Students bring a diverse array of characteristics to the educational environment, and it is natural for them to display a variety of emotional, psychological, and personal-social behaviors. These differences can lead to significant issues, including poor academic performance, truancy, and uncertainty in making informed decisions regarding their courses after junior secondary school as well as career choices in secondary school. Mathew and Baidoo-Anu and Adomaa (2021) emphasize that adolescent students in secondary schools around the globe confront an increasing number of social, personal, and academic challenges today. Many find themselves in difficult family situations, such as divorce or separation, and are often affected by conflicts at home. Furthermore, the rising security challenges in many regions, particularly in the northwestern states of Nigeria, intensify these issues. Consequently, these factors notably impact the academic performance, career choices, and personal-social adjustments of students in public senior secondary schools in Katsina State.

Osuoha (2024) asserted that guidance and counselling encompass essential activities that provide services aimed at assisting individuals both within and outside of the school environment. These services are designed to help individuals reach their full potential in emotional, moral, social, academic, and vocational development. Similarly, Arfasa et al, (2020) pointed out that guidance and counselling serve as educational resources that offer schoolchildren opportunities for comprehensive educational growth. This preparation equips them for meaningful and productive lives, ultimately contributing to enhanced functional education that supports sustainable national security and development. With this context in mind, the study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in public senior secondary schools in order to achieve these significant objectives.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the increasing recognition of education as a driver of sustainable development, Nigeria continues to grapple with systemic challenges that undermine the functionality and relevance of its secondary education system. One of the most overlooked yet critical components of this system is the provision of guidance and counselling services, a support structure designed to help students navigate academic, vocational, and psychosocial challenges. While guidance and counselling services are recognized as vital for student success, Nigeria's secondary schools, particularly in Katsina State, face systemic barriers to their implementation (Ikpuru2018).

In Katsina State, many public secondary schools either lack functional guidance and counselling units or operate with grossly inadequate resources. A 2023 report by Katsina's Ministry of Education revealed that 70% of public secondary schools lack trained counsellors, contributing to a 25% annual dropout rate (Yakubu, 2023). A recent assessment revealed that a significant number of schools do not have trained counsellors, and where they exist, they are often overburdened, underfunded, and unsupported by school leadership. Counselling rooms, where available, are poorly equipped, and essential tools such as career inventories, psychological tests, and referral systems are either outdated or nonexistent. Studies (Ikpuri, 2018; Gamariel, 2021) confirm that policy-practice disconnects persist nationwide, but Katsina's rural-urban disparities remain understudied.

The consequences are far-reaching. Students are left without structured support to explore career options, manage emotional stress, or develop life skills essential for self-reliance and civic engagement (Mosco, 2017; Gelernter & Regev, 2019). This gap contributes to rising rates of school dropout, examination failure, and youth unemployment, trends that directly undermine the goals of functional education and sustainable development. Moreover, in a region where socio-cultural pressures, insecurity, and economic hardship already constrain educational access, the absence of effective counselling services further vulnerable students, especially girls and those from rural communities.

While some studies have acknowledged the potential of guidance and counselling in promoting educational outcomes, there remains a dearth of empirical research focused specifically on Katsina State. There is also limited understanding of how these services, when properly implemented, can serve as a bridge between formal education and the broader goals of sustainable development: Quality Education. Without concrete data and targeted interventions, the promise of guidance and counselling as a transformative force in education will remain largely unfulfilled. Effective counselling aligns with SDG 4's emphasis on equitable, inclusive education, yet Katsina's resource gaps hinder progress toward these targets.

This study, therefore, seeks to fill this critical gap by investigating the influence of guidance and counselling services on functional education for sustainable development among secondary school students in Katsina State. It aims to provide evidence-based insights that can inform policy, improve practice, and ultimately enhance the educational experiences and life trajectories of young people in the state in particular, and the nation in general.

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of the study is to examine the perceived influence of guidance and counselling services in enhancing functional education for sustainable national security and development among secondary schools in Katsina State, Nigeria. Specifically, the research is set to;

1. Examine the perceived differences between male and female teachers' perceptions of guidance and counselling services in enhancing functional education in secondary schools in Katsina state.
2. Explore the impact of school location (urban and rural) on the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in promoting functional education in secondary schools in Katsina state.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions for the study:

1. What are the differences between male and female teachers' perceptions of guidance and counselling services in enhancing functional education for sustainable national security and development in secondary schools in Katsina state?
2. How does school location (urban and rural) impacts the perceived effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in promoting functional education in secondary schools in Katsina state?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested for the study:

H0₁: There is no significant difference between male and female teachers' perceptions of guidance and counselling services in enhancing functional education for sustainable national security and development in secondary schools in Katsina state.

H0₂: There is no significant difference in the perceived effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in promoting functional education between urban and rural secondary schools in Katsina state.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey design, a powerful approach that capture vital information about the current state of affairs. As articulated by Rea and Parker (2024), this type of study is designed to illuminate the existing circumstances, providing a clear snapshot of reality. The research focused on a target population of 365 public senior secondary school teachers within the Dutsin-Ma zonal education quality assurance area of Katsina state, which encompasses two local governments: Dutsin-Ma and Kurfi. To ensure a comprehensive understanding, the study employed a stratified random sampling technique, effectively categorizing the population into rural and urban locations. With the guidance of Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table, a sample of 186 participants was selected.

A self-designed and experts validated questionnaire, titled "Guidance and Counselling Services in Enhancing Functional Education for Sustainable National Security" (GCSFESSQ), was employed for this study. This questionnaire has undergone rigorous validation by experts in counselling and educational psychology, showcasing a reliability index of $r = 0.81$, established through careful pilot testing of 30 selected teachers from two schools in Katsina zonal education quality assurance which share similar characteristics with the population of this study. Utilizing a modified 4-point Likert scale, respondents expressed their agreement or disagreement with various statements, ranging from 4 = Strongly Agree (SA), 3 = Agree (A), 2 = Disagree (D), to 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD). Data analysis for this research was carried out using SPSS version 26. The researchers employed an independent t-test as an inferential statistic in testing the hypotheses at a significance level of 0.05.

Results

H0₁: There is no significant difference between male and female teachers' perceptions of guidance and counselling services in enhancing functional education for sustainable national security and development in secondary schools in Katsina state.

Table 1: Independent sample t-test on the role of guidance and counselling services

Guidance Services	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	p-value	Remarks
Counselling	Female	51	2.4706	.54233	-10.55	.000	Significant
	Male	135	2.6815	.83444			
Orientation	Female	51	4.3529	1.24617	-21.07	.000	Significant
	Male	135	2.0074	.08607			
Information	Female	51	1.2157	.4153	3.866	.000	Significant
	Male	135	1.2667	.49172			
Appraisal	Female	51	1.0000	0.0000	1.330	.185	Not Significant
	Male	135	1.0593	.31771			
Placement	Female	51	1.0000	.0000	1.143	.254	Not Significant
	Male	135	1.0889	.28564			
Referral	Female	51	2.5111	.50174	3.371	.001	Significant
	Male	135	1.0395	.19604			

Table 1 reports results from an independent sample t-test comparing male and female teachers' experiences with different guidance and counselling services, in the context of functional education for sustainable national security and development. The results indicate the significant differences in the opinions of male and female teachers regarding the provision of guidance services in a public senior secondary school within the Dutsin-Ma zonal quality assurance. The table shows the following calculated t-values and corresponding p-values: counselling service shows that the males ($M = 2.68$) scored higher than females ($M = 2.47$) with a significant difference $p = .000$. This indicates that males benefit from or access counselling services more significantly than females. The orientation service has females ($M = 4.35$) scored substantially higher than males ($M = 2.01$) showing a high significance $p = .000$ indicating female teachers perceiving orientation services as more impactful, or they've been more exposed to them.

Analysis for information service indicates that males ($M = 1.27$) scored slightly higher than females ($M = 1.22$) with $p = .000$ being statistically significant, despite the small mean difference. Although the gap is small, males reported slightly more access or benefit from information services. The appraisal service shows no difference in females ($M = 1.00$) with small increase for males ($M = 1.06$). This not being significant with $p = .185$ indicating that gender does not significantly affect access to or benefit from appraisal services. Placement also showed females score as 1.00, while the males had a small increase (1.09) with $p = .254$, not significant. The result indicates that placement services are equally minimal or uniformly perceived across genders. Finally, referral has males ($M = 2.51$) scored significantly higher than females ($M = 1.04$) with a significant value $p = .001$ indicating that males have greater access to or need for referral services.

This result shows that there are significant gender differences in most guidance services, notably in orientation and referral. Female teachers excelled in orientation-related experiences, while males reported greater exposure or impact in counselling, information, and referral. However, both appraisal and placement services showed no significant differences, likely indicating underutilization or low presence of these services across the board.

H0₂: There is no significant difference in the perceived effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in promoting functional education between urban and rural secondary schools in Katsina state.

Table 2: Independent sample t-test on school location with offering of guidance services

Guidance Services	Location	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	p-value	Remarks
Counselling	Urban	123	2.6667	.88398	2.609	.010	Significant
	Rural	63	3.46603	.59094			
Orientation	Urban	123	2.9756	1.41110	5.646	.000	Significant
	Rural	63	2.0074	1.12599			
Information	Urban	123	1.66748	.47037	2.601	.010	Significant
	Rural	63	1.0794	.41354			
Appraisal	Urban	123	1.2520	.43596	3.085	.002	Significant
	Rural	63	1.1270	.45763			
Placement	Urban	123	1.0000	.0000	2.829	.005	Significant
	Rural	63	1.0000	.0000			
Referral	Urban	123	1.1138	.31889	.727	.468	Not Significant
	Rural	63	2.4603	.50243			
Follow-up	Urban	123	2.3821	.77375	.133	.894	Not Significant
	Rural	63	2.6825	.46923			

Table 2 compares the provision of various guidance services based on school location (Urban and Rural) using an independent sample t-test. Counselling service in rural schools ($M = 3.47$) scored higher than urban schools ($M = 2.67$) has $p = .010$ being Significant. This shows that counselling services are perceived as more available or effective in rural schools. Orientation service in urban schools has ($M = 2.98$) significantly outscoring rural schools with ($M = 2.02$)

with a high significant value of $p = .000$. Urban schools here offer or implement orientation services more effectively than rural schools. Analysis for information services shows urban schools with $M = 1.67$ and rural: $M = 1.08$ and $p = .010$ being Significant. This result shows that urban schools provide better access to educational and career information services. On appraisal services, urban schools have $M = 1.25$ and rural schools have $M = 1.13$ with a significant value $p = .002$. This indicates that urban teachers reported more use of appraisal services (like psychological or aptitude testing). Analysis on placement services shows that both Urban and Rural schools report identical mean scores of 1.00, yet t -cal and p suggest $p = .005$ being significant, though unusual due to identical means (possible reporting or rounding issue). This shows that while the numerical difference is unclear, a significant test result may point to subtle variances in perception or implementation of placement services. Similarly, referral services indicates that urban schools ($M = 1.11$) vs. rural ($M = 2.46$) with $p = .468$ being not significant. Despite rural students reporting more referrals, therefore, the difference isn't statistically meaningful likely due to wide variation in responses or small sample size. The follow-up services have urban schools with ($M = 2.38$) vs. rural with ($M = 2.68$) giving $p = .894$, not significant. This result shows that follow-up services are fairly consistent across locations, with no statistically meaningful difference. In the overall analysis, urban schools excel in providing orientation, information, and appraisal services while rural schools perform better in counselling, and possibly referral, though the latter wasn't statistically significant. Some services (like placement and follow-up) are underdeveloped or uniform across both settings. The significant differences suggest geographical disparities that should inform resource allocation and policy focus.

Discussion of Findings

The findings on hypothesis one revealed a significant difference on the role of guidance and counselling services in enhancing functional education for sustainable national security and development based on gender. The current findings stand in contrast to those reported by Rea and Parker (2024), who indicated no significant difference in the perceptions of males and females regarding the implementation of guidance services (information, guidance, and counselling services) in senior secondary schools within the West Gomoa District of Ghana. Furthermore, the current findings also oppose those of Ogunsanmi (2021), who demonstrated no significant difference in the awareness of male and female teachers about the effectiveness of guidance services in primary schools located in South-west, Nigeria. This discrepancy may stem from the fact that Ogunsanmi's study focused on elementary schools, whereas the present research was conducted in secondary schools.

Additionally, results for null hypothesis two shows independent sample t -test on school location with regard to offering of guidance services in enhancing functional education for sustainable national security and development in public senior secondary schools within the Dutsin-ma zonal education quality assurance. The present findings disagrees with that of Ugwu (2024), who revealed no significant difference between rural and urban schools regarding their perceptions of the effectiveness of school guidance services (appraisal, information, and

counselling services) in secondary schools in Edo state. Moreover, the findings do not support Getachew's (2020) conclusions, which stated there is no significant difference in guidance practices based on school location in institutions of higher learning in Kano state. The present study disagreed with the findings of Getachew due to the fact that study was conducted in higher institutions of learning in Kano state.

Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight a significant disparity in the perspectives of male and female teachers regarding essential guidance services. There is a notable difference in their opinions on counselling, orientation, information, referral, and follow-up services, suggesting the need for a more tailored approach to address the diverse viewpoints of educators. Conversely, both male and female teachers exhibit similar views regarding appraisal and placement services in public senior secondary schools within the Dutsin-ma zonal education quality assurance framework. These findings not only shed light on the differences in teacher perspectives but also emphasize the importance of fostering an inclusive environment that recognizes and responds to these varied needs of enhancing functional education for sustainable national security and development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and the conclusion drawn, the study recommended the following:

1. The government and concerned agency should establish and equip counselling units in all secondary schools.
2. The government and concerned agency to recruit and train professional counsellors with continuous professional development.
3. Education stakeholders should integrate counselling modules into teacher education programmes.
4. Counselling associations and counsellors should conduct community sensitization campaigns to raise awareness of the value of guidance services.

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