

**GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES AND SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN ECONOMICS IN NORTHERN SENATORIAL DISTRICT OF CROSS RIVER STATE**

By

**Ambali Abdullateef (PhD)**

Department of Educational Psychology,  
Federal College of education Obudu, Cross River State  
Email: [ambalateef@gmail.com](mailto:ambalateef@gmail.com)

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**Odu Christopher**

Department of Educational Psychology,  
Federal College of education Obudu, Cross River State

**Abstract**

This study investigated guidance and counselling services and secondary school students' academic achievement in Economics in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State. Three research questions were raised and three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Correlational survey research design was adopted for the study. The sample was made up of five hundred eighty students (580) 300 males and 280 females with ages ranging between 12 and 18 years from the population of eighteen thousand four hundred and forty-five (18,445) secondary school students. Two instruments were used for data collection titled: Guidance and Counselling Service Questionnaire (GCSQ) and Students' Academic Achievement Test in Economics (SAAET). The instruments were subjected to face and content validation. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the hypotheses formulated for the study at .05 level of significance. Results indicated that the two hypotheses were rejected. This shows that there is significant relationship between information services, orientation service and secondary school students' academic achievement in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State. It was recommended amongst others that Schools must adopt a proactive approach to the design and delivery of information services. Counsellors should leverage modern technologies, such as digital platforms, to disseminate academic and career-related information.

**Keywords: Guidance and Counselling Services, Secondary School Students , Academic achievement and Economics**

**Introduction**

Guidance plays a vital role in addressing the educational, personal, social, mental, emotional and other similar problems of the students. Guidance as a term refers to a broad area of

educational activities and services aimed at assisting individuals in making and carrying out adequate plans leading to achievement of desired goal (Gibson, 2014). It is meant to equip the individual (student) with knowledge and techniques that will enable him or her to identify and find ways of solving problems. Guidance also helps to facilitate development of effective study habits, motivation, identifying learning or subject-related problems, helping students to see the relevance of school years in life and for future, developing skills, right attitude and interests to help in making career choice. Guidance and counselling, thus, promotes holistic development of every student. This shows the need for every teacher to become a 'guidance minded' teacher in the course of carrying out his/her duties with aim of making impacts in the students' lives. Counselling is the skilled and principled use of relationships that self-knowledge, emotional acceptance lead to personal growth. It is more concerned with addressing and resolving specific problems such as making decisions, coping with crises, working through feelings and inner conflicts or improving relationships with others. It is a process in which the helper expresses care and concern towards the person with a problem so as to facilitate that person's personal growth and positive change through self-understanding (Gibson, 2014).

Guidance and Counselling program was established to help students adjust in their socio personal vocational and educational activities in schools (NPE 2004). School is one of the complexes social institution where by students will learn certain habits as a result of interaction with different things and different people from different socio cultural background. (Ahmad 2015).

Guidance and Counselling services is a set of task and activities designed to assist students to cope with some problems and challenges as well as to adjust and improve their academic activities in schools. Ahmad (2015) stated that Guidance and Counselling services create options for students to develop fully and emphasizes strategies which enhance their potentials. Shehu, (2010) maintained that the research conducted by the Georgian Department of Education clearly stated that school Guidance and Counselling program encourages equity and accountability through social development decision making skills, academic achievement and school success for students, collaboration with parents and the community provide students with career and educational opportunities to ensure success in diverse and technological society.

Consequently, Malumfashi (2014) maintained that Guidance and Counselling program is significant and indispensable in our educational system, because with its new faced, revolutionized from the traditional curative, reaching out techniques, operational, presently, it offers, especially to students in different school level to an enormous opportunity to develop, realize their strength and weakness, as well as make personality adjustment wisely thereby leading to wise choices and productive decision. Malumfashi (2014) added that; guidance and counselling services should not be only for students that are unhappy about their school life but it is for everybody, troubled and none troubled”.

The focus of guidance and counselling services in school is to address the needs and concerns of students or learners at different levels of academic or educational development. Braddock (2017), states that the purpose of guidance and counselling in schools is to improve academic achievement, foster positive study attitudes and habit, increase acquisitions and application of conflict resolution skills and decrease school dropouts. The primary mission of a school’s guidance and counselling program is to provide a broad spectrum of personnel services to the students. Denga (2015), referred to these services as “cluster of formalized educational services designed by the school to assist students to achieve self-knowledge or self-understanding which is necessary for them to attain the fullest self-development and self-realization of their potential”. These services include: student appraisal service, information service, counselling service, placement service, orientation service, referral service, follow-up and evaluation service, and research service.

Academic achievement has been considered a significant factor in life and it is one of the most important goals to be achieved by all students. Nowadays, the people have become educational minded due to fast changing society and world. This challenging and changing social environment is creating competition in every field, that is why every parent has to set high goals for his child. Good academic records of the students are required for admission in reputed educational institutions, for scholarships, for job entrance, and for advance studies, they become prerequisite of success at every step in life. In the context of school situation, it means the scores obtained in annual examinations conducted by the institution or board at the end of the year as the end product of the students labour for the whole year or the performance made by the students in their subjects of study. Academic achievement means accomplishment in terms of scores of knowledge, understanding or skill acquired after

instructions and training in courses or subjects of study. It is generally measured by means of the marks obtained by the student out of total marks assigned for the course of the particular class.

Information service is tailored towards equipping students with the necessary information in the areas of educational, vocational and personal social. This information is very important because they assist students to make wise decisions about life. Garba, Tanko and Is-Haq (2023) study assessed the impact of guidance services on senior secondary school students' academic achievement in public schools of Kwara State. Four research objectives and four hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study. The study adopted correlation research design. The population of the students comprised of 102,112 senior secondary school students from three educational zones of Kwara State. Stratified random sampling technique was used to draw the sample from the study. A sample of 384 respondents was randomly selected out of the population. A 40-item structure questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three (3) experts, one from Measurement and Evaluation and two from Guidance and counselling unit from the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Technology Education ATBU Bauchi. Cronbach Alpha coefficient of reliability was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and Pearson Moment Correlation (PPMC). The results revealed that there exists significance relationship between orientation, information counselling and referral services and academic achievement of senior secondary school students of public schools in KwaraState with  $r = .026^*$  for orientation service,  $r = .015^*$  for information service,  $r = .036^*$  for counselling service and  $r = .035^*$  for referral service respectively. Based on the findings, it was recommended that guidance and counselling programmes should be strengthened in order to improve the academic achievement of secondary school students in public schools of Kwara state. Also, Kwara State government should endeavour to establish Guidance and Counselling Departments in all the secondary schools in the state to enable counsellors provide guidance services to students on how to develop, build, and promote their future career.

Orientation service is designed to familiarize fresh students with their environment. It is a process of initiating an individual to a work or learning situation and of instructing him about rules, regulations and responsibilities, as an introduction to a new situation. . Ajayelami and

Emme (2015) examine the effective orientation programme on students' academic performance among secondary schools in Ogun State. The study was carried out in 11 randomly selected public secondary schools in Ogun State. A sample 400 students were randomly selected from 5832 students in public secondary schools for the study. The design adopted for the study was a descriptive survey approach. Simple descriptive analysis was used. The major instruments used in this study were student questionnaire, teacher questionnaire and achievement test. Three research questions and three hypotheses were duly tested using t-test statistic. The findings of this study revealed that effective orientation programme have strong and positive influence on students' academic performance among secondary schools students.

The most important outcome of a guidance program is desirable change in the behaviour of students, such as improved school attendance, better study habits, better scholastic achievement, fewer scholastic failures, lower drop-out rate, better educational planning, and better home-school relations. Effective guidance and counselling programs balance corrective, preventive and developmental functions. In collaboration with parents, school administrators and teachers, the school counsellor can effectively achieve the goals of counselling.

### **Statement of the problem**

Poor academic achievement among secondary school students in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State, gives concern to stakeholders in education and this has a negative influence on the various achievement of secondary school students. It is an unpalatable situation for stakeholders to see students still performing poorly in their academics despite numerous ways in which they are guided either by their teachers or parents. The researcher observed that many students were experiencing behavioural, traumatic and psychological problems which could be attributed to lack of counselling or poor counselling services. The study focused on finding out if lack of proper guidance and counselling could be attributed to these problems and if it had been the cause for decline in academic achievements. In spite the delivering of guidance and counselling services, efforts of teachers, and school administrators in providing the necessary required materials and teaching facilities, towards ensuring effective and efficient teaching and learning to boast the academic achievement of students,

as well as learning outcomes among students, but is very much sad that a huge number of students were observed and realized their academic achievements are below average. The problem of this study therefore is to investigate how guidance and counselling services enhance academic achievement in secondary schools in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State.

### **Aim and objectives of the study**

The main aim of the study is to investigate the relationship between guidance and counselling services and secondary school students' academic achievement in the research area. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. ascertain the extent to which information service relates to secondary school students' academic achievement in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State.
2. examine extent to which orientation service relates to secondary school students' academic achievement in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State.

### **Research questions**

The following research questions were posed to guide to guide the study:

2. How does information service relate to secondary school students' academic achievement in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State?
3. To what extent does orientation services relate to secondary school students' academic achievement in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and will be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- There is no significant relationship between information services and secondary school students' academic achievement in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State.

- Orientation services does not significantly relate to secondary school students' academic achievement in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a correlational survey design in order to determine the relationship between guidance and counselling services and secondary school students' academic achievement in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State. According to Emaikwu (2015), correlational survey design seeks to establish what relationship exists between two or more variables. These studies usually indicate the direction and magnitude of the relationship between the variables. The population of this study consisted all the senior secondary two (SS II) students of 2023/2024 academic session in the ninety (90) public secondary schools in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State. The target population is eighteen thousand four hundred and forty-five (18,445). Multistage sampling technique was used in the selection of schools, since the five (5) Local Governments Areas do not have equal number of schools. Therefore, the schools were stratified according to their local governments and 40% of schools taken from each of the local government areas. The hat and draw method of random sampling technique will be used to select the number of schools that represent 40% of schools in the local government. This was to give equal chance to all the schools in each local government area to participate in the study. In the selection of the subjects, the simple random sampling technique was used and the selection followed a hat and draw process where for each selected school and the students. The sample for this study was five hundred and eighty (580) SS II students (2023/2024 session), that was drawn from 36 public secondary schools sampled from the five local government areas that make up Northern Senatorial District. The sample was made up of five hundred eighty students (580) 300 male and 280 female with ages ranging between 12 and 18 years. Sample distribution is as shown in Table 2 (see Appendix D). The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled: Guidance and Counselling Service Questionnaire (GCSQ) and Students' Academic Achievement Test in Economics (SAAET) with 15 items breakdown of 5 items was used to measure each sub-variables. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: section A and B. Section A contains information about the respondents Bio-Data while section B contains items related to the sub-variables of the study and secondary school students' academic achievement test in Economics. The section was rated using on a four point rating scales of

strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) respectively. A total of five hundred and eighty (580) copies of questionnaire was administered to respondents. The teachers that assisted in the questionnaire administration was given guidelines on modalities of administering the instruments. Enough time was allocated for them to complete the answers honestly and return them to the researcher. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the hypotheses formulated for the study at .05 level of significance.

### Presentation of results

This section handles the hypotheses that were formulated for the purpose of this study.

**Hypothesis one:** There is no significant relationship between information services and secondary school students' academic achievement in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State. This hypothesis is tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis as presented in table 1.

Pearson Correlation Coefficient on the significant relationship between information services and secondary school students' academic achievement in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State

Variables	$\Sigma x$	$\Sigma x^2$	$\Sigma xy$	$r_{-cal}$
	$\Sigma y$	$\Sigma y^2$		
Information services	10114	177764	169024	.184
Students' academic achievement	9686	165146		

*Significant at 0.05 alpha level, r-critical = .172, df = 578*

Result of analysis as presented in table 2 revealed that, r-calculated is .184. This indicates a moderate and positive correlation. The result was found to be significant since the calculated r-value of .184 is higher than the critical r-value of .172 at 0.05 significant level and 578 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there exist

a significant relationship between information services and secondary school students' academic achievement in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State.

**Hypothesis Two:** Orientation services does not significantly relate to secondary school students' academic achievement in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State. This hypothesis is tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis as presented in table 2. Pearson Correlation Coefficient on how orientation services does not significantly relate to secondary school students' academic achievement in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State

Variables	$\Sigma x$	$\Sigma x^2$	$\Sigma xy$	$r\text{-cal}$
Orientation services	10035	175505		
Students' academic achievement	9686	165146	3081127	.278**

*Significant at 0.05 alpha level, r-critical = .172, df = 578*

Result of analysis as presented in table 3 revealed that, r-calculated is .278\*\*. This indicates a moderate and positive correlation. The result was found to be significant since the calculated r value of .278\*\* is higher than the critical r-value of .172 at 0.05 significant level and 578 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected; this implies that orientation services significantly relate to secondary school students' academic achievement in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State.

**Discussion of findings**

The findings of hypothesis one indicates that, there exist a significant relationship between information services and secondary school students' academic achievement in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State. The study lends credence to Garba, Tanko and Is-Haq(2023) study which assessed the impact of guidance services on senior secondary school students' academic achievement in public schools of Kwara State. Four research objectives and four hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study. The study adopted correlation

research design. The population of the students comprised of 102,112 senior secondary school students from three educational zones of Kwara State. Stratified random sampling technique was used to draw the sample from the study. A sample of 384 respondents was randomly selected out of the population. A 40-item structure questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three (3) experts, one from Measurement and Evaluation and two from Guidance and counselling unit from the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Technology Education ATBU Bauchi. Cronbach Alpha coefficient of reliability was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and Pearson Moment Correlation (PPMC). The results revealed that there exists significance relationship between orientation, information counselling and referral services and academic achievement of senior secondary school students of public schools in Kwara state with  $r = .026^*$  for orientation service,  $r = .015^*$  for information service,  $r = .036^*$  for counselling service and  $r = .035^*$  for referral service respectively.

The findings of hypothesis two indicates that, orientation services significantly relate to secondary school students' academic achievement in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State. This is because the calculated r-value of  $.278^{**}$  is found to be greater than the critical r-value of  $.172$  at 0.05 level of significance and 578 degree of freedom. This finding is in line with Ajayelami and Emme (2015) examine the effective orientation programme on students' academic performance among secondary schools in Ogun State. The study was carried out in 11 randomly selected public secondary schools in Ogun State. A sample 400 students were randomly selected from 5832 students in public secondary schools for the study. The design adopted for the study was a descriptive survey approach. Simple descriptive analysis was used. The major instruments used in this study were student questionnaire, teacher questionnaire and achievement test. Three research questions and three hypotheses were duly tested using t-test statistic. The findings of this study revealed that effective orientation programme have strong and positive influence on students' academic performance among secondary schools students.

## Conclusions

This study investigated the relationship between guidance and counselling services and secondary school students' academic achievement in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State. The findings demonstrated a significant relationship between information services provided through guidance and counselling and the academic achievement of secondary school students. This underscores the transformative potential of well-structured information services, which equip students with critical knowledge about academic opportunities, career pathways, and personal growth strategies. These services empower students to make informed decisions, align their efforts with achievable goals, and optimize their academic performance. The study equally established that orientation services significantly influence students' academic achievement. Effective orientation programs play a pivotal role in facilitating students' transition into new academic environments, fostering a sense of belonging, and building resilience against challenges. These programs provide students with essential information about school policies, expectations, and available resources, thus enhancing their capacity to engage positively with the academic process.

## Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Schools must adopt a proactive approach to the design and delivery of information services. Counsellors should leverage modern technologies, such as digital platforms, to disseminate academic and career-related information.
2. The importance of orientation services cannot be overstated. Schools should institutionalize comprehensive orientation programs for both new students and those

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