

# INFLUENCE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING ON STUDENTS MOTIVATION AND SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT AMONG COVENANT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, OGUN STATE

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## Abstract

This study examined the influence of career guidance and counselling on students motivation and school adjustment. Research on school counselling and guidance services has found that students who receive career development services reported greater career awareness and higher levels of career exploration and planning. A total of two hundred and eighty nine first year Covenant University students were randomly selected. The ex post facto research design was adopted for the study. Two hypotheses were raised and tested. The basic school adjustment questionnaire (BSAQ) and the students' motivation towards school questionnaire (SMSQ) were used for data collection. Hypothesis one and two were analyzed using independent t-test. The result showed that career guidance and counselling made a significant influence on students' motivation ( $t=3.059$ ,  $t\text{-critical}=1.96$ ,  $df=287$ ) and school adjustment ( $t=2.979$ ,  $t\text{ critical}=1.96$ ,  $df= 287$ ). Therefore it was recommended that schools provide an effective counselling service in order to help motivate the students towards school and also help them adjust to school.

Keywords: Career guidance and counseling, students' motivation, school adjustment.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Counselling is a cultural invention that is as old as man. It is often referred to as a helping relationship between a trained personnel and untrained individual. Counselling has made a huge contribution to the life of millions as we live in a complex, busy, and changing world. Man who is usually referred to as a social animal will inevitably at one time or the other need guidance and counselling for effective decision making. Over the year's career guidance and counselling services have been modified by the development of various theories and techniques to help address the various needs of humans.

According to Burks and Steffire (1979), counselling can be defined as a relationship between a professional counsellor and a client. This relationship is usually person-to-person, and may sometimes involve more than two people. It is designed to assist clients to understand and clarify their views of their life, and to learn to attain their self-determined goals through meaningful, well-informed choices and through resolution of challenges of an emotional or interpersonal nature. Dryden and Feltham (1993) define counselling as a principled relationship which involves the application of one or more psychological theories and other set of communication skills, moderated by experience, intuition and other interpersonal factors, to clients' personal concerns, challenges or aspirations. Its predominant custom is facilitation rather than giving advice or coerciveness while Herr and Cramer (1996) state that guidance and counselling is a verbal process in which a counsellor and counsellee(s) are in a dynamic and collaborative relationship, aimed at identifying and working on the counsellee's goals, in which the counsellor employs a repertoire of diverse techniques and processes, to help bring about self-understanding, understanding of behavioural options available, and ability to make informed decisions in the counsellee, who has the responsibility for his or her own actions.

Career is a lifelong profession. According to Sears (1982), career is the interaction of work roles and other life roles over a person's lifespan including both paid and unpaid work in an individual's life. People create career patterns as they make decisions about education, work, family and other life roles. Career guidance and counselling is to help individuals with career planning, the decision-making process, implementation of career choice, career adjustment, and the interplay between career and personal issues. Career development is in stages, we do not just arrive at it and it is the duty of a career counsellor to guide individuals through these stages by assisting them in exploring, pursuing and achieving their career goals. Therefore, the role of career guidance and counselling in schools is to assist the students with career development and other career related issues they may be faced with (such as course of study, learning difficulties) using counselling theories and techniques.

According to the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education, University of Louisville (2012), school counselors can play a powerful role in the career development of students. For instance, research on school counselling and guidance services has found that students who receive career development services reported greater career awareness and higher levels of career exploration and planning. Further, long-term effects of career counselling resulted in higher levels of success in transitioning into life roles, a better sense of direction in their careers, and higher levels of overall life satisfaction.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (1998) revealed that there are various assumptions underlying the practice of career counselling. These include the following perspectives:

1. People have the ability and opportunity to make career choices for their lives. The amount of freedom in choices is partially dependent upon the social, economic, and cultural context of individuals.
2. Opportunities and choices should be available for all people, regardless of sex, socio-economic class, religion, disability, sexual orientation, age, or cultural background.
3. Individuals are naturally presented with career choices throughout their lives.
4. People are generally involved in a wide range of work roles across their lifespan. These roles include both paid and unpaid work.
5. Career counsellors assist people to explore and attain their career goals.
6. Career counselling basically consists of four elements:
  - o Helping individuals to gain greater self-awareness in areas such as interests, values, abilities, and personality style.
  - o Connecting students to resources so that they can become more knowledgeable about jobs and occupations.
  - o Engaging students in the decision-making process in order that they can choose a career path that is well suited to their own interests, values, abilities and personality style.
  - o Assisting individuals to be active managers of their career paths (including managing career transitions and balancing various life roles) as well as becoming lifelong learners in the sense of professional development over the lifespan.
7. The reasons why individuals enter particular occupations vary according to the amount of importance placed on personal preferences, such as interests, or external influences, such as labour market trends or parental expectations.
8. Career decision-making is not something that happens only once in a person's life but, rather, it is an ongoing process that might take place at any age.
9. All forms of work are valuable, and contribute to the success and well-being of a society.

As it has been stated by the above bodies, individuals have different personalities, interests, abilities, and drive which plays a role in individuals career choice because it enables them to have an idea on how to narrow down their education to a particular profession but in some situations certain individuals need assistance in realizing some of this capabilities and this is where career guidance and counselling comes in to assist such individuals. Much emphasis should be placed on students because career development at an early stage would guide the individual to explore different career opportunities of interest also, it helps keep the individual well academically adjusted and motivated towards school work.

Adjustment to school is influenced by different personal and family characteristics, and societal trends. It is the interaction of the child's personal characteristics and their experiences that determines how the student adjusts to school (Margetts, 2002). School adjustment is the process of coping with the role of being a student and to other aspects of the school environment. Failure to adjust can lead to mental health issues and school dropout and may require counselling. Students face many adjustments in school such as changes in teachers, classrooms, school and class rules and procedures, performance expectations, difficulty of the work, and peers. Their successes in negotiating these challenges predict school success.

School adjustment has been constructed overtime in terms of children's academic progress or achievement (Birch & Ladd, 1996). This is important, but being very limited it narrows the search for causes and events in children's environments that may affect adjustment. On a broader level,

adjustment does not only involves the children's progress and achievement but also their attitudes toward school, anxieties, loneliness, social support, and academic motivation such as engagement, avoidance, absences (Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 1998).

According to Kiuru, Aunola, and Salmela–Aro (2009), defined school adjustment as a large construct which includes different aspects such as academic achievement, school satisfaction, school engagement and pro social behavior. Well-adjusted students usually have value for what they are learning, are usually involved in classroom activities and receive high grades while Abdullah, Elias, Mahyuddin and Uli (2009), defines school adjustment as a person's interaction with his or her environment and looks into academic achievement, personal growth and accomplishments outside the classroom such as in art, music, creativity and leadership. According to him an adjusted student is one who acquires adequate grades, passes his or her courses and eventually graduates.

Schacter, Gilbert, & Wegner (2011), defined motivation as a psychological feature that causes an organism to act towards a desired goal, elicit controls and sustains certain goal-directed behaviour(s). It can be considered as a force which is a psychological force that compels or reinforces an action toward a desired goal. For example, hunger is a motivation that controls a desire to eat. Motivation is the purpose or psychological cause of an action.

Different types of motivation are frequently described as being either extrinsic or intrinsic. Extrinsic motivations are those that arise from outside of the individual and often involve rewards such as trophies, money, social recognition or praise. Intrinsic motivations are those that arise from within the individual (Kendra, 2014). There are three major components to motivation which are activation, persistence and intensity. Activation involves the desire to initiate behaviour, such as enrolling in a class. Persistence is the continued effort put towards achieving a goal even though obstacles may exist, such as reading for courses in order to earn better grades; it requires an investment of time, energy and resources. Finally, intensity can be seen in the concentration and energy that goes into pursuing a goal. For example, one student might excel without much effort, while another student will study regularly, participate in discussions and take advantage of research opportunities outside of class.

## **1.1 Statement of Problem**

Previous studies on the influence of guidance and counselling on motivation and school adjustment have been done respectively. Scheel and Gonzalez (2007) examined a theoretical model of academic motivation consisting of (a) academic self-efficacy, (b) purposefulness and intentionality, and (c) support through school counseling for autonomous learning was explored with 346 high school juniors. The study indicated academic self-efficacy and utilization of school counseling to be significant predictors of academic motivation. Also, Lapan, Gysbers, and Sun (1997) studied the impact of guidance programs on the school experiences of high school students. Students who have access to counselling programs reported being more adjusted, positive and having greater feelings of belonging and safety in their schools. A thorough study of this previous researches has shown that researchers have been limited in their study due to various factors the most common being their own idea on concept of what motivation and school adjustment entails, some include the entire school environment, rules, peers and so on while others focus on the student's adjustment with regard to their academic achievement all of this are useful in carrying out a study on school adjustment but a combination of the two would give a more detailed research on school adjustment as it covers all areas of the student. Therefore, this research is aimed at combining all the factors that involve motivation and school adjustment and studying them as a whole. This research is focused on lack of proper career guidance and counselling for first year undergraduates and how it affects their motivation and adjustment to school because of the change in environment and systems they need proper guidance on how to adjust properly.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

The general aim of this research is to investigate the influence of career guidance and counselling on students motivation and adjustment to school. The specific objectives are to;

1. To reveal the importance of career guidance and counselling for students.
2. To compare the motivation towards school of those students who received career guidance and those who have not received guidance and counselling.

3. To compare the adjustment of those students who received career guidance and counselling and those who did not receive.

### **1.3 Research Hypotheses**

1. Those who received career guidance and counselling will be more motivated in school than those who did not receive guidance and counselling.
2. Those who received career guidance and counselling will be well-adjusted to school than those who did not receive guidance and counselling.

## **2 METHODS**

### **2.1 Design**

Ex post facto research design was used in this study. It was used because the independent variable has already occurred and therefore cannot be manipulated. "Ex post factor" translates to "after the fact" and this means that the research of the study was done after the actual event (guidance and counselling) took place and it is commonly used for research on human behaviour.

### **2.2 Sample**

The sample of this study is 289 respondents from the first year students of Covenant University from both the College of Science and Technology and College of Development Studies. The sampling technique used in this study is simple random sampling which means that the participants were randomly selected.

### **2.3 Instrument**

Research instrument is the scale of measuring the variables in a study. The research instrument used for this study was developed by the researcher. The instrument consisted of three sections which are; exposure to counselling inventory, basic school adjustment questionnaire and the students motivation towards school questionnaire.

#### *A. Exposure to Counselling section*

The Exposure to Counselling section is a 3-item inventory that is designed to assess the students' previous exposure to counselling, it is a scale which is scored by either yes or no where yes is 1 and no is 0, the range of scores of participant is from 0-3. A pilot study was carried out and the reliability coefficient of exposure to counselling inventory was Cronbach Alpha of 0.91.

#### *B. The Basic Student Adjustment section*

The Basic Student Adjustment section consists of 10 items that measure participants' level of adjustment. It is a 4 point likert scale. This scale is scored by either strongly agree which is 1, agree as 2, disagree as 3 and strongly disagree as 4 depending on the participants answer. This instrument contains negatively warded question which will be scored using the reverse scoring method where strongly agree becomes 4, agree becomes 3, disagree becomes 2 and strongly disagree becomes 1, the negatively warded questions are question 1,4,6,7. The range of scores of participant is from 0-40. The reliability coefficient of the student adjustment questionnaire was Cronbach Alpha of 0.97.

#### *C. The Students Motivation Towards School section*

The Student Motivation towards School section consists of 10 items that measure participants' motivation. It was also developed by the researcher. It is a 4 point likert scale. This scale is scored by either strongly agree which is 1, agree as 2, disagree as 3 and strongly disagree as 4 depending on the participants answer. This instrument contains negatively warded question which will be scored using the reverse scoring method where strongly agree becomes 4, agree becomes 3, disagree becomes 2 and strongly disagree becomes 1, the negatively warded questions are question 4,7,8,9. The range of scores of participant is from 0-40. The reliability coefficient of the student adjustment questionnaire was Cronbach Alpha of 0.97.

## 2.4 Procedure for Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered to the first year students of Covenant University. Participation in the study was voluntary, the purpose of the study was explained to the participants before the questionnaire was administered and there was no incentive given for participation. Anonymity was assured by asking participants not to write their names on the questionnaire forms. The questionnaire was physically distributed by the researcher to all participants on a Sunday afternoon after their chapel service and was retrieved immediately.

## 3 DATA ANALYSIS

Data generated from the instrument was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Both hypotheses 1 and 2 were analyzed using independent t-test as it measures differences between two variables.

### 3.1 Results

Hypothesis 1

H<sub>1</sub>: Those who received career guidance and counselling will be more motivated than those who did not receive career guidance and counselling.

Table 1: Independent t-test comparing the motivation towards school of those who received career guidance and counselling and those who did not receive career guidance and counselling

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	T Observed	Df	T Critical	Sig. Level
Those who did not receive guidance counselling	214	18.85	5.89	3.06	287	1.96	0.83
Those who received guidance counselling	75	16.71	4.67				

From the result of t-test analysis in the table above, it was discovered that the T-observed (3.06) is greater than the T-critical value (1.96) and therefore significant under 0.05 level with 287 degree of freedom. Thus, the alternate hypothesis was accepted, which states that "Those who received career guidance and counselling will be more motivated than those who did not receive career guidance and counselling".

Hypothesis 2:

H<sub>1</sub>: Those who received career guidance and counselling will be more adjusted to school than those who did not receive career guidance and counselling.

Table 2: Independent t-test comparing the adjustment to school of those who received guidance and counselling and those who did not receive guidance and counselling

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	T Observed	Df	T Critical	Sig. Level
Those that did not receive guidance counselling	214	22.67	5.08	2.98	287	1.96	0.91
Those who received guidance counselling	75	20.56	5.84				

From the result of t-test analysis in the table 2 above, it was discovered that the T-observed (2.98) is greater than the T-critical value (1.96) and therefore significant under 0.05 level with 287 degree of freedom. Based on this, the alternate hypothesis was accepted, which states that "Those who

received career guidance and counselling will be more adjusted to school than those who did not receive career guidance and counselling”.

## **4 DISCUSSION**

This study focused on first year students, with the aim to discover the influence of career guidance and counselling on their motivation towards school and their adjustment to school. Two research hypotheses were raised and tested, the findings of this research hypotheses were discussed below:

Hypothesis one stated that “those who have received career guidance and counselling would be more motivated towards school than those who have not received career guidance and counselling” when tested, the result revealed that guidance and counselling is significant and it influences students motivation as those who have received guidance and counselling were more motivated towards school than those who have not received guidance and counselling. Mau, Hitchcock, and Calvert (1998) found that high school counsellors influenced their students' future plans by encouraging them to have high expectations. A high proportion of 10th and 12th grade students who were surveyed perceived that their counsellor expected them to attend college regardless of their racial background and it was observed that high school students' own motivation and educational expectations for themselves increased over time.

Hypothesis two stated that “those who have received guidance and counselling would be more adjusted to school than those who have not received guidance and counselling” when tested, the result revealed that guidance and counselling is significant and it influences students adjustment to school as those who have received career guidance and counselling were more adjusted than those who have not received career guidance and counselling. Lapan, Gysbers and Sun (1997) studied the impact of more fully implemented guidance programs on the school experiences of high school students and the result revealed that students who have access to counselling programs reported being more adjusted, positive and having greater feelings of belonging and safety in their schools.

In this study, it was observed that most students do not seek for guidance and counselling and that there are students who have not received guidance and counselling and are still motivated and adjusted to school, which is an indication that there are other contributing factors to a student's motivation towards school and adjustment other than guidance and counselling. Although this is not the focus in this research but it is important to note for further studies in this area.

### **4.1 Conclusion**

This study identified that career guidance and counselling is an essential factor that contributes in assisting students. This study identified that career guidance and counselling has an influence on students' motivation and also identified that career guidance and counselling influences a student's adjustment to school. The main identification in this study was that those students who had received career guidance and counselling were more motivated and better adjusted to school than others who had not received career guidance and counselling and also many students do not seek guidance and counselling and this may be due to lack of exposure or knowledge about the counselling service. Findings of this study can assist schools on how to motivate the students and also help the students with coping strategies in school. Therefore, it is important for schools to provide adequate and effective counselling service and personnel to work together with the school administrators and teachers to assist students especially the first year students cope well with the possible challenges they could face in their new environment and to also motivate the students towards achieving excellence.

### **4.2 Recommendation**

Based on the major findings, the following recommendations are provided:

1. The ministry of education should give more recognition to counselling services as essential in schools and ensure that all schools have an effective counselling service as there are students who need guidance and counselling.
2. The schools should ensure they hire qualified persons to provide guidance and counselling in order to assist the students.
3. The school should provide a standard counselling environment where the students can feel very comfortable.

4. The students should be encouraged by to receive career guidance and counselling to discuss their challenges and get assistance.
5. The school administrators and teachers should work together with the counsellors to understand the challenges the students are facing and work with them through it.
6. The counsellors should help the students not only with issues relating to school but other personal challenges they may be confronted with.
7. The counsellors should ensure confidentiality. They should strive to gain the trust of the student and maintain the trust by safeguarding the information gotten from the students. Consent should be given by the student before disclosure of any information to their parents/guardians, school administrators, teachers or law enforcement agencies

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