



# **Examination Of The Contemporary Issues In The Implementation Of The Effective Guidance And Counselling In Nigerian Tertiary Institutions**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Guidance and Counselling services are increasingly being recognized as an integral part of the educational system around the world. Implementation of Guidance and Counselling programs in tertiary institutions provides many benefits to students which include, enhancement of the student's overall well-being, academic success, gate opportunities for students to receive career guidance, explore different career paths, and make informed decisions about their future, gate personal and emotional support, have safe space to discuss personal issues, cope with stress, and enhance their mental health and emotional well-being. It is against this background that this paper examines some issues that hinder the effective implementation of the G and C in Nigerian Tertiary institutions and suggests the way forward.

**Keywords:** Guidance and Counselling programs, students

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Conception of Guidance and Counselling**

According to these studies, (David et al., 2021; Bashari, 2020; Uju 2020; Omoyemiju, 2022; Mamman 2022; Florence et al., 2020; David et al., 2021; Dakasku and Bah, 2022) Guidance refers to assisting individuals in making informed decisions, setting goals, and developing skills to navigate personal, educational, and career-related challenges. It involves providing information, support, and resources to help individuals explore their interests, strengths, and aspirations, (David et al., 2021). It is also conceived as a collaborative process that involves a trained professional providing support, guidance, and interventions to individuals experiencing personal, emotional, or psychological difficulties. It aims to promote well-being, self-understanding, and the development of coping strategies to address challenges and improve mental health. Some scholars see it as an integrated approach that combines elements of guidance and counselling to provide comprehensive support to individuals, (David et al., 2021). It encompasses both educational and personal domains, addressing academic, career, and personal development needs. It involves challenges, individuals to make well-informed decisions, cope with challenges, and enhance their overall well-being, (David et al., 2021; Bashari, 2020; Uju 2020; Omoyemiju, 2022; Mamman 2022; Florence et al., 2020; David et al., 2021; Dakasku and Bah, 2022). Educational guidance focuses specifically on supporting individuals in educational settings, such as schools or tertiary institutions, (David et al., 2021). It involves providing academic and career-related guidance, assisting students in their educational journey, and helping them make appropriate educational

choices. Career counselling also focuses on helping individuals explore and make decisions related to their career paths. It involves assessing interests, skills, and values, providing information about different career options, and assisting individuals in setting career goals and developing strategies to achieve them, (Uju 2020; Omoyemiju, 2022; Mamman 2022; Florence et al., 2020; David et al., 2021; Dakasku and Bah, 2022)

### **Why Guidance and Counselling in Tertiary Institutions?**

Guidance and Counselling are applicable to both children and adults therefore it is good to provide Guidance and Counselling at tertiary institutions in Nigeria based on the following examined reasons:

- i. **Academic Support:** Guidance and counselling help students succeed academically by helping in areas such as study skills, time management, goal setting, and subject selection. It helps students develop effective learning strategies and overcome academic challenges, (David et al., 2021).
- ii. **Career Guidance:** Guidance and counselling assist students in exploring and making informed decisions about their career paths. It involves assessing interests, skills, and values, providing information about different career options, and helping students set career goals. Career guidance helps students align their educational choices with their future aspirations, (David et al., 2021).
- iii. **Personal and Emotional Support:** Guidance and counselling services provide a safe and confidential space for students to discuss and address personal and emotional issues. Counsellors offer support, guidance, and interventions to help students cope with challenges, manage stress, build resilience, and enhance their emotional well-being, (David et al., 2021).
- iv. **Social and Life Skills Development:** Guidance and counselling help students develop essential social and life skills that contribute to their personal growth and success. This includes communication skills, conflict resolution, decision-making, problem-solving, and building healthy relationships. These skills are crucial for their overall development and future success, (David et al., 2021).
- v. **Mental Health Support:** Guidance and counselling play a vital role in promoting and supporting students' mental health. Counsellors provide early intervention, assessment, and referral for mental health concerns. They offer counselling services, create awareness about mental health issues, and contribute to the creation of a positive and supportive school environment, (David et al., 2021).
- vi. **Crisis Intervention:** Guidance and counselling services are crucial in times of crisis or emergencies. Counsellors provide immediate support, counselling, and resources to students and the school community during challenging situations such as accidents, natural disasters, or incidents affecting student well-being, (David et al., 2021).

The overall purpose of guidance and counselling in schools is to foster the well-being, personal growth, and academic success of students. It aims to create a supportive and inclusive environment that enables students to thrive and reach their full potential, (David et al., 2021).

### **The Challenges of the Effective Implementation of Guidance and Counselling in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions.**

- i. **Inadequate Funding:** Guidance and counselling education often receives limited financial resources and budget allocations. This lack of funding hampers the provision of necessary infrastructure, training programs, counselling materials, and resources to support counselling services in schools adequately, (David et al., 2021).
- ii. **Limited Awareness and Understanding:** There is a lack of widespread awareness and understanding about the importance and benefits of guidance and counseling education. Many individuals, including students, parents, and even some educators, may not fully grasp the role and significance of counseling in supporting students' holistic development.

- iii. **Insufficient Number of Qualified Counselors:** There is a shortage of qualified and trained guidance counselors in Nigeria. The student-to-counselor ratio is often high, making it challenging for counselors to provide individualized attention and support to students. This shortage also affects the availability of counselors in remote or underserved areas.
- iv. **Inconsistent Implementation:** The implementation of guidance and counseling education is inconsistent across different schools and regions in Nigeria. Some schools may have well-established counseling programs, while others may lack dedicated counseling services altogether. This inconsistency results in unequal access to counseling support for students, (David et al., 2021).
- v. **Lack of Professional Development Opportunities:** Limited opportunities for professional development and continuous training hinder the growth and effectiveness of guidance counselors. Many counselors may not have access to regular training programs, workshops, or conferences to enhance their skills, keep up with current best practices, and stay updated on research in the field, (David et al., 2021).
- vi. **Stigma and Cultural Barriers:** There can be cultural stigma associated with seeking counseling services in Nigeria. Some individuals may perceive counseling as a sign of weakness or view mental health issues as taboo. This stigma and cultural barriers can prevent students from seeking the support they need and create a reluctance to engage with counselling services, (David et al., 2021).
- vii. **Inadequate Collaboration and Networking:** There is often a lack of structured collaboration and networking opportunities for guidance counsellors in Nigeria. Limited platforms for counsellors to connect, share best practices, and learn from their peers hinder their professional growth and the exchange of valuable insights and resources, (David et al., 2021).

Addressing these problems requires collective efforts from policymakers, educational institutions, communities, and stakeholders. It involves increasing awareness about the importance of guidance and counselling, advocating for adequate funding, improving counsellor training and professional development opportunities, addressing cultural barriers, and promoting collaboration among counsellors and relevant organizations, (David et al., 2021). Moreover, these are the specific ways forward for in addressing the above issues:

#### **Way Forward for Effective Implementation G & C in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria**

- i. **Increase funding:** Allocate more financial resources to Guidance and Counselling programs to ensure adequate staffing, training, infrastructure, and resources. This can be achieved through increased budgetary allocations from the government or seeking external funding sources.
- ii. **Train more counsellors and staff:** Invest in the training and professional development of guidance counsellors. This includes providing scholarships, organizing workshops, and collaborating with professional counselling associations to enhance the skills and knowledge of counsellors. Staff who are working in counselling centers but professionals should be trained in maintaining confidentiality and creating a safe and secure environment for counselling sessions. This training should cover ethical guidelines, professional boundaries, and handling sensitive information.
- iii. **Improve infrastructure:** Establish dedicated counselling centres or rooms in tertiary institutions equipped with the necessary resources for counselling sessions. This includes providing confidential spaces, computers, reference materials, and assessment tools.
- iv. **Develop counselling materials:** Create and update counselling materials that are relevant to the Nigerian context. This can include career guidance resources, mental health support materials, and materials addressing personal development and well-being.
- v. **Partnership and resource sharing:** Tertiary institutions can establish partnerships with counselling associations, mental health organizations, NGOs, and community-based organizations. These partnerships can involve sharing resources, expertise, and best practices in counselling. For

- example, institutions can collaborate with counselling associations to provide training opportunities for counsellors or access counselling resources developed by these associations. Guest speakers and workshops: Invite professionals from external agencies to conduct workshops, seminars, or training sessions for counsellors and students. These experts can share their knowledge, experiences, and expertise in specific areas of counselling, such as career guidance, mental health, or personal development. This exposure can broaden the perspectives of counsellors and students and provide them with valuable insights. Referral networks: Establish referral networks with external agencies to ensure that students have access to specialized counselling services beyond what the institution can provide. This can include partnerships with mental health clinics, crisis helplines, or community-based counselling centers. Having a well-established referral network can ensure that students receive appropriate support for their specific needs.
- vi. Promote awareness and destigmatize counselling: Conduct awareness campaigns to educate students, faculty, and parents about the importance of Guidance and Counselling services. Address misconceptions and reduce the stigma associated with seeking counselling support.
  - vii. Integrate counselling into the curriculum: Embed counselling modules or courses within the curriculum to ensure that all students have access to basic counselling skills and knowledge. This can help create a supportive environment and equip students with essential life skills.
  - viii. Monitor and evaluate counselling services: Establish a system to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of counselling services in tertiary institutions. Regular assessments can help identify areas for improvement and ensure the quality of services provided, (Bashari, 2020; Uju 2020; Omoyemiju, 2022; Mamman 2022; Florence et al., 2020; David et al., 2021; Dakasku and Bah, 2022).

## CONCLUSION

This paper examined and specifically highlighted the issues with the implementation of Guidance and Counselling in Nigerian Tertiary institutions. The paper recommends strategies such as collaboration among stakeholders, including government bodies, educational institutions, counselling professionals, and students themselves, collaborating with external agencies in addressing the challenges and improving the implementation of Guidance and Counselling in tertiary education in Nigeria.

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