

School Culture and Guidance Counselling Services as Correlates to Enhance Students Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Gwagwalada Area Council Area, FCT, Abuja, Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper focused on school culture and guidance counselling services as correlates to enhance students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT, Abuja. The researcher set two research questions and applied survey research design for the study. The population of the study was 676 teachers (retrieved from website 2022). The sample of the study was 322 teachers sampled through random sampling technique. The instrument used for the study was questionnaire on "School Culture and Guidance Counselling Services as Correlates to Enhance Student Academic Performance (SCGCSC ESAP)". The instrument was validated by experts in the Departments of Educational Management and Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, University of Abuja. Test-retest method was applied to collate the data for analysis. Pearson Moment Correlation coefficient and Spearman Brown Rho Correlation coefficient statistics were used to analyse the data. The coefficient index obtained was 0.71, mean statistics was used to analyse data gotten from research questions. The findings of the study revealed that teachers did not apply their school culture to enhance students' academic performance but

that they applied guidance and counselling services' to achieve students' excellent academic performance. Based on the findings the researcher recommended that secondary schools management should encourage teachers to apply their schools' culture to help students perform better in their academics. The secondary school management should also encourage teachers to continue to apply guidance and counselling services to enhance students' academic performance.

Introduction

It is evident that school culture is experienced by all institutions stakeholders; the school management, teachers, students, parents, community members as well as the government. Each school has its symbol, values, mission statement shared vision, etc. The school may create its culture to build a sense of commitment among staff, students, parent and other significant individuals in and around the school. Kane, Hoff, Cathcart, Heifner, Palmon and Peterson (2016) posited that the school culture denotes the heart and soul of a school, the features of a school that motivate students and teachers to love and be interested to be in the school to carry out their worthwhile school activities.

School culture can have strong influence on the individuals in the school. It can determine the desire, interest and likeness of the staff and the students to be in school daily. It determines the atmosphere, tone or feeling prevailing in a particular school. A school culture that is based on cooperation, collaboration, friendliness, cordial relationship, understanding, care, help, warm affection towards one another etc can motivate staff and students to have interest in the school. Hsin-Hsiang & Mao-neng (2015) maintained that school culture reinforced the relationship between effective leadership and effective teaching which enhances student outcomes. Yusuf & Noor (2016) averred that a quality school culture will show the level of interactions among school community, management, school principals and the rules that are foundation of institutions, individual character and students performance. Positive school culture builds a positive relationship among individuals in the schools, it moulds students' behaviour, promotes sense of commitment among staff, sharpens teaching and learning approaches and enhances students' outcomes (Audu, 2023). These positive school culture according to Audu include: collaboration, communication, cordial relationship, encouragement, productivity, objectives and goals achievement.

Guidance and counselling education like positive school culture is designed to assist individuals to understand, self, environment, society, be equipped to solve life problems and to be successful. Katanyi, Igbo and Ugo (2019) asserted that the

guidance counsellor can help the students through his/her professional skills to cope with life problems, fit into the academic, vocational and social personal milieus in school and in life generally.

Ebuk & Afu (2020) affirmed that students can be helped by professional guidance experts to acquire skills and mastery in their different subject areas. Aho (2019) averred that guidance counseling education does not only prepare students for future vocation but that it also helps in the attitudinal adjustment of students' behaviour towards schooling which can help them perform excellently academically. Katamai & Onwono (2015) emphasized that guidance and counselling education will enable students to acquire life skills which will help them to have positive attitude towards achieving their academic goals. The school heads when combining quality school culture and guidance counselling education can help to enhance students' academic performance.

School Culture and Guidance Counselling Education to Enhance Students Academic Performance

Culture is a dominant factor in any institutions. Every institution experiences and expresses different types of school cultures which influence the school's merit or worth, staff, students, parents, school community etc. Understanding the type of culture that exists within a school will assist school leaders, teachers, students to be successful. Audu, (2023) posited that the dimensions of school culture are strong or positive and weak or negative. The positive school culture to the researcher focuses on strengths, collaboration, professional development, productivity, communication, cordial relationship, kindness, improvement in teaching, encouragement, sense of belonging etc. Gruenert & Valentine 2006 cited in Audu (2023) emphasized on collaboration as a positive school culture which can prompt school leaders to empower and incorporate teachers into school decision-making process, engage in innovative conversations, cooperate, plan together, attend conferences, build up their current teaching practices, evaluate school programmes, improve in their school activities, solve their educational problems, improve their performance to achieve the school goals. Lewis & Wahlston 2011 cited in Yusuf, Osman and Noor (2016) contended that collaborative school culture helps teachers in sharing the school norms and values which solve the problem of separation among them and motivate them to be collectively responsible for students' teaching and learning activities. The researchers added that this school culture encourage teachers to improve their teaching by applying best teaching pedagogies. Bashar & Esin (2013) affirmed that collaborative school culture among others helped the school to maintain unity of purpose, collegial support on positive momentum for school transformation process to take place.

Tzafrir (2016) maintained that professional development as a school culture exposed teachers to different additional training programmes such as; in-service training, seminars, workshops, West African Examination Council (WAEC) marking coordination. Teachers acquire more knowledge from these programmes to improve their work practices. Shikokoti, Okoh and Chepkonga (2021) opined that teachers availing themselves in professional development or school in-service training will be more systematic and logical in disseminating instructions and in applying suitable teaching pedagogies. Teachers who attend in-service training acquire in-depth knowledge of the subject, apply best teaching methods in the management of the students in class, evaluation of students, that these help teachers perform their job efficiently and effectively (Ekpoh, Oswald and Victoria 2013), Jahangir, Saheen and Kazmi 2012). Audu (2023) averred that positive school culture impact positively on classroom teaching and learning, motivate students to learn and aid teachers in achieving their objectives and goals.

Alternatively, the weak toxic or negative dimension of school culture borders on all the activities in the school that hinder the effectiveness of the school programmes. This school culture lack mission and vision, value laziness and apathy, appreciate separateness, exclusivity and negative peer relationships (Deal & Peterson 2016). Gruenert & Whitaker (2015) and Debnam & Johnson (2014) maintained that negative, toxic or weak school culture promotes failure which is seen as an inevitable circumstance beyond control, than, as an opportunity for improvement. It leads to stagnation, disintegration, promotion of self-interest above the achievement of the institutional goal. It also leads to bullying behaviours which in this context occurs in situations where there is a power or status difference (Bradshaw, Waasdorp, Debnam & Johnson 2013 cited in Audu, 2023). Students in this type of schools, face repeated negative actions from their teachers hence, they are likely to fail, perform poorly academically or quit school before graduating (Audu 2023). This school culture can reduced its effects on students when guidance services are applied.

Guidance and counselling education provides programmes or services which bring appreciative transformation to students' lives (Ebuk & Afu 2020). Information service provides information on the academic ability and subject interest of students. This will clear confusion, failure on the subjects offered by the students and helps them to perform as expected. Appraisal service will help the students' deficiencies, weaknesses and promotes strengths especially in subjects performed by the students. Nwachukwu 2007 cited in Ebuk & Afu (2020) posited that this guidance service will encourage students' strengths and help improve their weaknesses for better academic performance. Evaluation service revealed the performance of students in choice subjects. Poor performance will warrant follow-up service by guidance counselors to ensure that such situation is taken care of for the students to perform better

academically. Guidance counselling service promotes and train students on life skills. This is the ability of students to adapt to behaviour that will make them to deal effectively with the challenges of everyday life (World Health Organization (WHO) 1997 cited in Aho (2019). Life skill education will enable student to be assertive, disciplined, have caring attitude, relate cordially with others, do not involve in disruptive behaviours and create opportunity for them to study seriously. This will help to enhance students learning and academic performance, hence, school culture and guidance counselling are vital correlates to enhance students' academic performance.

Statement of the Problem

The culture of the school can influence the school and students' performance positively or negatively. Positive or strong school culture which include: staff strengths, collaboration, professional development, productivity, cordial relationship, encouragement, sense of belonging, improvement in teaching etc. are contingent to teachers' effective job performance and students' excellent academic performance.

More so, guidance and counseling services such as: information service provides information on the students' academic ability for the guidance counsellors to help students to perform better in academics. Appraisal service helps in strengthening students' weaknesses academically, evaluation and follow-up services help students to take their study seriously so as to perform excellently in academics. Life skills help students adapt to behavioural patterns' which will help them in life generally and to perform well academically. School culture especially the positive ones and guidance counselling education can boost students' academic performance. The problem is whether the teachers will be committed to apply positive school culture and guidance counselling services in secondary schools to boost students' academic performance. This has motivated the researcher to carry out the study on school culture and guidance/counselling education as correlates to enhance students/academic performance.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate school culture and guidance counselling as correlates to enhance students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT, Abuja. Specifically, the researcher wants to:

1. Find out whether school culture is applied by teachers to enhance students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja.
2. Investigate whether guidance counselling services are applied by teachers to enhance students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja.

Research Questions

The research answered two questions :

1. Have teachers applied school culture to enhance students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja.
2. Have teachers applied guidance and counselling services to enhance students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja.

Methodology

The paper focused on school culture and guidance counselling services as correlates to enhance students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja. The researcher set two research questions to guide the study. Survey research design was applied for the study. The population of the study was 676 teachers (retrieved from website 2022). The sample of the study was 322 teachers sampled through random sampling technique. The instrument was questionnaire on "School Culture and Guidance Counselling Services (SCGCS). The instrument was validated by experts in the Departments of Educational Management and Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, University of Abuja. Test-retest method was used to collate data for analysis. Pearson Moment Correlation coefficient and Spearman Brown Rho Correlation coefficient were used to analyse the data. The coefficient index obtained was 0.71. Mean statistics was used to analyse data gotten from research questions. The mean score of 2.50 and above were adjudged as agreed whereas the mean score of 2.49 and below were adjudged as disagreed. Sectional mean score of 2.50 was considered as accepted while that of 2.49 and below was considered rejected when interpreting the phenomenon.

Data Analysis

Research Question One: Have teachers applied school culture to enhance students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja?

Table 1: Teachers applying School Culture to Enhance Students' Academic Performance

N = 322

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}	Decision
To enhance students/ academic performance teachers have imbibed the school culture of:							
1.	Collegial collaboration	61	76	89	96	2.31	Disagreed
2.	Professional development	52	69	111	90	2.25	Disagreed

3.	Increasing productivity	51	56	101	114	2.13	Disagreed
4.	Communication flow	33	35	127	127	1.91	Disagreed
5.	Maintaining cordial relationship with colleagues	81	90	76	75	2.50	Agreed
6.	Encouragement from the school head	70	72	92	88	2.30	Disagreed
7.	Having high sense of belonging	49	58	132	83	2.22	Disagreed
8.	Applying appropriate teaching pedagogies	38	43	97	144	1.92	Disagreed
9.	Improvement in teaching	39	32	131	120	1.96	Disagreed
10.	Having high student academic performance	69	71	89	93	2.30	Disagreed
Sectional mean						2.18	Disagreed

The table above showed that the respondents with the mean scores of: 2.31, 2.25, 2.13, 1.91, 2.30, 2.22, 1.92, 1.96 and 2.30 disagreed that teachers have imbibed collegial collaboration; professional development; increasing productivity; communication flow, receiving encouragement from the school head; having high sense of belonging; applying appropriate teaching pedagogies; improvement in teaching and having high students' academic performance. Respondents with the mean score of 2.50 agreed that teachers have imbibed the school culture of maintaining cordial relationship with colleagues. All the respondents with the sectional mean score of 2.18 rejected that teachers have applied school culture to enhance students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT, Abuja.

Research Question Two: Have teachers applied guidance and counselling services to enhance students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja.

Table 2: Teachers Applying Guidance and Counselling Services to Enhance Students Academic Performance

N = 322

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}	Decision
To enhance students' academic performance teachers have applied guidance and counselling services to:							
1.	Strengthen students' academic weaknesses	162	107	33	20	3.20	Agreed
2.	Encourage students to be studious	98	87	73	64	2.60	Agreed
3.	Mould their behaviour towards academics and life in general	157	109	28	28	3.30	Agreed
4.	Provide information on students' academic abilities	106	97	59	60	2.70	Agreed

5.	Clear students confusion and failure on subjects	111	137	39	35	3.00	Agreed
6.	Encourage students in their academic pursuits	133	122	40	27	3.10	Agreed
7.	Advise them to stick to their subject interest	105	78	67	72	2.60	Agreed
8.	Advise them to resist from truancy	104	100	67	51	2.70	Agreed
9.	Help them to be focused on their academics	129	151	20	22	3.20	Agreed
10.	Aid them to perform excellently academically	120	94	59	49	2.80	Agreed
Sectional mean						2.92	Agreed

The table above revealed that the respondents with the mean scores of: 3.20,2.60,3.30,2.70,3.00,3.10,2.60,2.70,3.20 and 2.80 agreed that teachers applied guidance counselling services to enhance students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area council, FCT, Abuja.

Discussion

Research question one finding proved that teachers did not apply school culture to enhance students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT, Abuja. Researchers opinions showed that school culture of teachers' collaboration and professional development can motivate them to collectively be responsible to students learning and will encourage them to improve their teaching pedagogies (Gruenert & Valentine 2006 cited in Audu2023, Lewis & Wahlston 2011 cited in Yusuf Osman and Noor 2016). This to them will enhance students' academic performance.

The finding of research question two revealed that teachers applied guidance and counselling services to enhance students' learning in senior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area council, FCT, Abuja. Researchers' findings are in corroboration with this study finding. Ebuk & Afu (2020) and Nwachukwu (2007 cite in Ebuk & Afu (2020)) averred that teachers applying guidance and counselling services of; providing information on students' academic performance will help to strengthen their weaknesses and correct their deficiencies. Evaluation and follow-up will also help students to improve and maintain excellence in their academic performance.

Conclusion

The researcher concluded from the study findings that teachers did not apply school culture to enhance students' academic performance but that they enhanced it by applying guidance and counselling services.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended that secondary schools' management should encourage teachers to apply positive school culture when interacting with students so that the students can perform well academically. They should encourage teachers to continue to apply guidance counselling services on students to help them achieve excellent academic performance.

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