

ABSTRACT

This study investigated guidance counsellor's strategic roles and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted correlational research design. The study was guided by three research questions and three null hypotheses. The population of the

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UIDANCE COUNSELLOR'S STRATEGIC ROLES AND SCHOLASTIC ADJUSTMENT OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN RIVERS- EAST SENATORIAL DISTRICT, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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INTRODUCTION

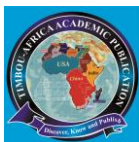
A student in every situation of life should be able to effectively perform in accordance with some guiding principles. Every student should be able to strike a balance among various forces within and outside the school. Being able to move from old mindset to the learning, to be adapted to scholastic ways of life. Tola (2020) defined adjustment as a process wherein one builds variations in the behaviour to achieve harmony with oneself, others or the environment with an aim to maintain the state of equilibrium between the individual and the environment. In addition, Bishe (2019) explained that scholastic adjustment is the process students' adapt to the role of being a student and to various aspects of the school environment as failure to adjust can lead to mental health issues and school dropout. Scholastic adjustment plays a vital role in a student's life, and it is like a pillar on which student's entire life is based. It is



study consisted of 82,649 public senior secondary school students in the area. The sample size was 400 senior secondary school students which was adopted through the use of simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire, titled: “Guidance Counsellor’s Strategic Roles Questionnaire” (GCSRQ) and Scholastic Adjustment Scale (SAS)”. The instruments were validated by experts in department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling. The reliability of the instrument was determined through test re-test reliability method which a reliability index of $r=0.73$ for (GCSRQ) and $r=0.72$ for (SAS). Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to answer the research questions and test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that there was a positively strong correlation between guidance counsellors assessment role, guidance counsellors career-guidance role, guidance counsellors emotional support role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State. It further revealed that there was significant relationship between guidance counsellors assessment role, guidance counsellors career-guidance role, guidance counsellors emotional support role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State. It was recommended among others that the; Government in collaboration with the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) should set-up counselling centres at all secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District to help combat adjustment challenges of students.

Keywords: Counsellors, Guidance Roles, Students.

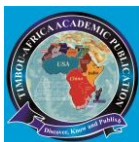
not only related to a student’s progress and achievement, but also their attitudes towards school, anxieties, loneliness, social support, academic motivation and interpersonal relationship (Olayinka. 2019). When students do not adjust to school systems, they may exhibit symptoms of relationship troubles or difficulty making friends, negative moods such as feeling sad, anxious, ashamed, angry, low motivation, poor body image, early sexual



activity, drinking alcohol and/or taking drugs to feel better as a result of their inability to relate well with self and others in their environment (Nwankwo, 2018). There are other tendency for students to exhibit undesirable behaviour such as disobedience, fighting, noise making, absenteeism, cultism, drug abuse, premarital sex, lateness to school and teenage pregnancy among others.

Chingtham (2018) stressed that students who lack scholastic adjustment exhibit some delinquent acts such as begging, truancy, vagrancy, obscenity, loitering, pilfering, drinking, and gambling in order to satisfy one need or the other. Students' adjustment at school may be influenced by 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 at school (Magets, 2018). Aunola, (2019) defined scholastic adjustment as a large construct which includes different aspects such as academic achievement, school satisfaction, school engagement and pro-social behaviour as well-adjusted students usually have value for what they are learning, are usually involved in classroom activities and receive high grades. Students face many adjustments in school such as changes in teachers, classrooms, schools and class rules/procedures, performance expectations, difficulty of the work, and peers. Their success in negotiating these challenges predict the academic and general school success of student.

At this junction one is poised to ask, what is the reason for the increasing rate of maladaptive behaviours of student? Recently, a factor that is thought to have an impact on the scholastic adjustment of students is guidance counsellor's strategic roles. Guidance counselors play a crucial role in ensuring these students receive the necessary support and resources to succeed academically, socially and emotionally (Magets, 2018). However, the specific roles and responsibilities of guidance counselors in this context are not always clearly defined, and their contributions are often overlooked. The importance of guidance counselors in supporting secondary school students cannot be overstated. They are uniquely positioned to identify and address the unique needs of students, including those related to academic, social and emotional development.



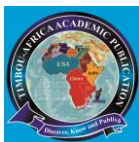
Osaro (2021) noted that among the strategic roles of guidance counselors in secondary schools, they are to collaborate with teachers, parents and other professionals to provide counseling and therapeutic interventions to promote social- emotional well – being, self-advocacy and self-determination among students. Despa (2022) added that they are to advocate for inclusive practices and policies within the school community, promoting a culture of acceptance and support for students irrespective of their diversity. Despite the critical roles they play, guidance counselors often face challenges in supporting students in regular schools.

It becomes imperative to explore the strategic roles guidance counselors play in mitigating the challenges faced by students. By understanding the nuances and integrating evidence- based counseling practices, the educational system can better support secondary school students, ensuring they receive the necessary guidance to thrive within the school environment. Therefore, the study investigated guidance counsellor's strategic roles and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

In the realm of education, the fundamental role of guidance counsellors in addressing the diverse needs of students cannot be overstated. In an educational system, success is measured by the level of students' academic performance and adaption to the learning environment. It is believed that for students to excel academically, the students must be properly adjusted at school. Students scholastic adjustment does not only involves the children's academic progress and achievement but also their attitudes toward school, anxieties, loneliness, social support, academic motivation, engagement, and avoidance which have become of concern to parents, teachers, school heads, government and other stakeholders on what could be done to improve students' scholastic adjustment.

The researcher observed that upon admission, students usually find it difficult to adapt in school. Their reactions also vary as there are still many who complain, cry, often ask to go home, rebel at the same time, fight with friends,



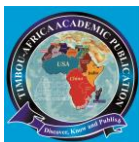
and some even run away from school. Other problems that are often displayed by the students are sometimes feelings of inferiority, violating school rules, opposing teachers, not carrying out classwork, playing truant, been late to school, difficulty in getting along with peers and difficulty in communicating with teachers which are obstacles to scholastic adjustment. Could it be that guidance counsellor's strategic roles which may have been underplayed in place of teachers supervisory roles and use of corporal punishment could have an effect on the scholastic adjustment of secondary school students?

Keen observation by the researcher further indicated that the lack of clear guidelines and protocols for guidance counsellors catering to senior secondary school may further pose a significant obstacle as the absence of standardized procedures may result in inconsistent support, thereby hampering the development of tailored interventions and strategies to address the unique adjustment challenges faced by these learners. Consequently, this gap may not only affect the educational outcomes of students but also impact their scholastic adjustment. Therefore the study investigated guidance counsellor's strategic roles and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate guidance counsellor's strategic roles and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study intended to:

1. Determine the relationship between guidance counsellors assessment role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State
2. Examine the relationship between guidance counsellors career-guidance role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State
3. Find out the relationship between guidance counsellors emotional support role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State



Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the relationship between guidance counsellors assessment role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State?
2. What is the relationship between guidance counsellors career-guidance role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State?
3. What is the relationship between guidance counsellors emotional support role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State?

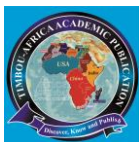
Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

1. There is no significant relationship between guidance counsellors assessment role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State
2. There is no significant relationship between guidance counsellors career-guidance role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State
3. There is no significant relationship between guidance counsellors emotional support role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State

Method

The study employed a Correlational research design. The survey comprised 82,649 public senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 400 senior secondary school students for the study which was determined through Taro Yamane Scientific Method. The research instrument were self-designed instruments titled “Guidance Counsellor’s Strategic Roles Questionnaire” (GCSRQ) and Scholastic Adjustment Scale (SAS). Section A; contained Bio-data of the respondents, Section B; contained items on guidance



counsellors assessment role, Section C; contained items on guidance counsellors career-guidance role, Section D; contained items on guidance counsellors emotional support role, Section E; contained item statements on scholastic adjustment. The “Guidance Counsellor’s Strategic Roles Questionnaire” (GCSRQ) and Scholastic Adjustment Scale (SAS) had 35 items structured on a four point modified Likert Scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The (GCSRQ) yielded a reliability index of $r=0.73$ and $r=0.72$ for (SAS). The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used in answering the research questions and testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The data collected were analyzed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 25.0.

Results

Research Question One:

What is the relationship between guidance counsellors assessment role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State?

Hypothesis One:

There is no significant relationship between guidance counsellors assessment role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State.

Table 1: *Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation of Guidance Counsellors Assessment Role and Scholastic Adjustment of Students*

		Guidance Counsellors Assessment Role	Scholastic Adjustment	Decision
Guidance Counsellors Assessment Role	Pearson Correlation	1	0.820**	Ho Rejected
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	
	N	400	400	
Scholastic Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	0.820**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		
	N	400	400	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

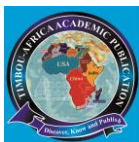


Table 1 of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation results reveal that r-value of 0.820 with its corresponding p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$ (which is less than) the chosen level of significance was gotten. This shows a strong positive relationship between guidance counsellors assessment role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State. Since the p-value is less than the chosen significant level, the null hypothesis was **rejected**. It therefore indicates that there is significant relationship between guidance counsellors assessment role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State.

Research Question Two:

What is the relationship between guidance counsellors career-guidance role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State?

Hypothesis Two:

There is no significant relationship between guidance counsellors career-guidance role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State.

Table 2: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation of Guidance Counsellors Career-Guidance Role and Scholastic Adjustment of Students

		Guidance Counsellors Career-Guidance Role	Scholastic Adjustment	Decision
Guidance Counsellors Career-Guidance Role	Pearson Correlation	1	0.961**	Ho Rejected
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	
	N	400	400	
Scholastic Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	0.961**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		
	N	400	400	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

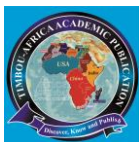


Table 2 of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation results reveal that r-value of 0.961 with its corresponding p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$ (which is less than) the chosen level of significance was gotten. This shows a strong positive relationship between guidance counsellors career-guidance role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State. Since the p-value is less than the chosen significant level, the null hypothesis was **rejected**. It therefore indicates that there is significant relationship between guidance counsellors career-guidance role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State.

Research Question Three:

What is the relationship between guidance counsellors emotional support role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State?

Hypothesis Three:

There is no significant relationship between guidance counsellors emotional support role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State.

Table 4: *Pearson's Product Moment Correlation of Guidance Counsellors Emotional Support Role and Scholastic Adjustment of Students*

		Guidance Counsellors Emotional Support Role	Scholastic Adjustment	Decision
Guidance Counsellors Emotional Support Role	Pearson Correlation	1	0.700**	Ho Rejected
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	
	N	216	216	
Scholastic Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	0.700**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		
	N	216	216	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

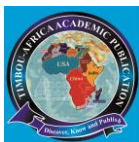
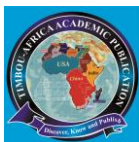


Table 4 of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation results reveal that r-value of 0.700 with its corresponding p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$ (which is less than) the chosen level of significance was gotten. This shows a strong positive relationship between guidance counsellors emotional support role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State. Since the p-value is less than the chosen significant level, the null hypothesis was **rejected**. It therefore indicates that there is significant relationship between guidance counsellors emotional support role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

Guidance Counsellors Assessment Role and Scholastic Adjustment of Students

Data in table 1 of Pearson Product Moment Correlation results revealed that r-value of 0.820 with its corresponding p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$ (which is less than) the chosen level of significance gotten. This shows a strong positive relationship between guidance counsellors assessment role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State. The study revealed that students who received guidance counsellors assessment have better scholastic adjustment than those without guidance counsellors assessment. Since the p-value was less than the chosen significant level, the null hypothesis was rejected. It therefore indicated that there was significant relationship between guidance counsellors assessment role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State. The finding agrees with the study of Ahmadu (2017) whose findings showed that there was significant influence of assessment role by counsellors on the academic success of students. It also agreed with the findings of Wagnern (2019) who found that guidance counsellor's assessment, significantly influence referral decision, and accurate assessment lead to more school adjustment of students. The finding is not surprising to the researcher as ordinarily, preliminary observation indicates that students who received assessment and appraisal from counsellors had



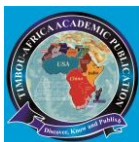
greater potential to succeed academically and often felt more comfortable and adjusted in the school. This could be because assessment helps to provide knowledge of client problems so as to understand how to assist the client overcomes his or her problem.

Guidance Counsellors Career-Guidance Role and Scholastic Adjustment of Students

Data in table 2 of Pearson Product Moment Correlation results revealed that r-value of 0.961 with its corresponding p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$ (which is less than) the chosen level of significance gotten. This shows a strong positive relationship between guidance counsellors career-guidance role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State. The study revealed that students that received career guidance have better scholastic adjustment than those who did not receive career guidance. Since the p-value was less than the chosen significant level, the null hypothesis was rejected. It therefore indicated that there was significant relationship between guidance counsellors career-guidance role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State. The finding agreed with the study of Orewere (2018) who revealed that when guidance counsellors carry out career guidance services for students, it enhanced their career choice, achievement motivation and general school adjustment.

Guidance Counsellors Emotional Support Role and Scholastic Adjustment of Students

Data in table 3 of Pearson Product Moment Correlation results revealed that r-value of 0.700 with its corresponding p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$ (which is less than) the chosen level of significance. This demonstrates a positive relationship between guidance counsellors emotional support role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State. The study revealed that students who received emotional support from guidance counsellors had high scholastic adjustment. Since the



p-value was less than the chosen significant level, the null hypothesis was rejected. It therefore showed that there was significant relationship between guidance counsellors emotional support role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State. This finding agrees with the study of Survadi (2018) who found that there was significant effect of counselor role such as emotional support on students behavioural adaptation and academic performance. It also agrees with the findings of Ecoba (2021) found that guidance counselors provide emotional support through; empathy, understanding, rapport, empowerment and advocacy. The finding is however shocking to the researcher as one would think that the component of emotional support was a factor that affected more of younger scholars in pre-primary and primary educational institutions than senior secondary school students.

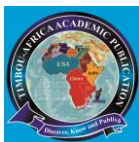
Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that there was a positively strong correlation between guidance counsellors assessment role, guidance counsellors career-guidance role, guidance counsellors emotional support role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State. It further revealed that there was significant relationship between guidance counsellors assessment role, guidance counsellors career-guidance role, guidance counsellors emotional support role and scholastic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Rivers-East Senatorial District, Rivers State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the researcher made the following recommendations:

1. Government in collaboration with the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) should set-up counselling centres at all secondary schools in Rivers-East Senatorial District to help combat adjustment challenges of students;



2. Guidance counsellors should intensify their engagement in formative, summative and prognostic assessment of students to enable them ascertain the barriers to students' adjustment in school. This will enable the guidance counsellor adopt appropriate approach in assisting them resolve their problems;
3. Guidance counsellors should increase the level of emotional support given to students to enable students become properly adjusted in school. They should be provided with resources to manage their own emotional well-being, given the demands of their role;
4. The government through the ministry of education should provide training and retraining of guidance counsellors in order to enhance the knowledge on guidance counsellors' strategic role in improving the scholastic adjustment of students.

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