

**Analysis of Guidance and Counselling Services Provided at the National Open
University of Nigeria in North Central Zone.**

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Abstract

The study examines some guidance and counselling services Provided by Guidance Counsellors in the National Open University of Nigeria in North Central Zone. Six study centers were used for the study with a total population of 13,977. A sample of 389 was selected following Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling size selection technique. Stratified sampling method was then used to select sample from each of the six study centers. Wuse Study Centre (208), Lokoja Study Centre (21), Special Study Centre Immigration (26), Lafia Study Centre (17), Jos study centre (68) and Ilorin Study Centre (49). Primary method of data collection with the use of questionnaire method was adopted for the study. The study adopted statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS) to analyze the data. Bar charts were plotted on summary of the data obtained from administered questionnaires with analysis of variance table (ANOVA) used to test the hypotheses. From the analysis, it was discovered that various activities carried out by counsellors to reach the students have been proved as effective counselling services that had yielded positive effect on the overall performance of the students of the National Open University of Nigeria.

Keywords: Analysis, Guidance, Counseling Services, National Open University of Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Guidance and counseling services provides those experiences which assists each student to understand, accept himself and live potently in his society (Nnabuike, 2014), Okpalaenwe, (2014), Egenti, (2016) and Akinade (2012). Many people are of the view that guidance and counselling can be done by everyone. Counselling rather is a professional relationship that empowers diverse individual, families, and groups to accomplish mental health wellness education and career goals. (American Association of Counselling 2020). Studies revealed that provision of guidance and counselling services in schools help to provide reflective thinking; coping ability for students and academic success (Bedi, Thomas, Sandhu & Jain, 2020; Hossain & Faisal, 2013).

At the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) students are guided by counsellors to enable them adjust to the tenets of Open and Distance Learning (ODL).

The National Open University of Nigeria is a federal Open and Distance learning University known for its flexible and accessible education to different range of students. Open and Distance learning essentially means a form of instruction by mode other than the face to face method, where there is physical separation between the teacher and the learner and instruction takes place through a variety of media including print and modern ICT (Jegede, 2016). The former president of Nigeria Chief Olusegun Obasanjo saw to the resuscitation of NOUN on October, 2002. NOUN was established to provide education in a non- conventional manner, to exposing all Nigerians accessibility to formal and non-formal education in a manner that is convenient to their circumstances (NOUN, 2015). Since then it has grown from strength to strength both in the number of students, facilities and structure. At present NOUN has 117 Study Centres spread across every zone in Nigeria (NOUN, 2023). The management are doing all they can to make sure that NOUN students complete their studies and graduate. Counsellors are posted at the study centre to guide them yet a lot of students still misbehave, engage in malpractice, fail their courses while others drop out of school. Is it that they do not understand the ODL mode of learning or that the counsellors are not doing their work? Hence the analysis of guidance and counselling services at the National Open University of Nigeria in North Central Zone.

Statement of the Problem

In recent time, students are faced with unlimited problems that may be from home, from peer groups or personal issues that need counselling to resolve. Among these problems could be excessive drinking of alcohol, taking illegal drugs, lack of information on how to go about resolving educational problems or not having knowledge about ODL mode of learning. These could majorly be classified into social,

traditional and educational problems. This could escalate into lack of adequate knowledge on life, lack of future direction, emotional disturbances, aggression, and stress, non-respect of the staff and lecturers, examination malpractice, sorting, failure in examination, dropping out of school, difficulty rejoining the academic world having ,feeling of isolated; difficulty in embrace technological learning which ODL offers and so on. One of the greatest benefits of guidance and counselling in schools is that it helps to prepare students to handle academic and other problems. This positive trajectory is only possible through proper guidance and counselling program (Jyoti,Pooma, Reema, Sakshi & Sangieta2022).

Notwithstanding there is need to examine the efficacy of guidance and counselling services used by the Guidance counsellors in meeting the needs of users in the present day of technological advancement and an increase in violent, crime and youthful exorbitant., The study examine the various guidance and counselling services used by the counsellors to ameliorate these social, traditional and educational problem facing the students of the National Open University of Nigeria in North Central zone.

Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i To examine educational and vocational services provided by guidance counsellors to students
- ii. Establish that orientation and information services are provided by guidance counsellors to NOUN students.
- iii. To established the means used by Counsellors to provide guidance and counselling services to the students of National Open University of Nigeria.

Research questions

- i How does guidance counsellors provide educational and vocational services to the National Open University of Nigerian students?
- ii. How does guidance counsellors provide orientation and information services to the National Open University of Nigerian students?
- iii. What are the means used by guidance counsellors to provide guidance and counselling services to the students of the National Open University of Nigeria?

Hypothesis 1:

H0: There is no significant difference on the effect of educational and vocational services provided by guidance counsellors on student's performance in NOUN.

Hypothesis 2

H0: There is no significant difference on the orientation and information services giving by guidance counsellors on the students output in NOUN

Hypothesis 3

H0: No significant difference exist on the means through which Counsellors carry out Guidance and counselling services and its effect on NOUN students

Reasons for Guidance and counselling services in schools

Guidance and counselling services are essential ingredient for shaping, for decision making and thinking capabilities of both students and staff of the school. It helps to prepare students academic career, social challenges, develop them physically, mentally, morally and emotionally to cope with learning situations within and outside the school. Effective counselling program is important in improving the students' achievement (Bogba, 2016). Several studies have been conducted on guidance and counselling services in schools to buttress this assertion (Ebizie, Enajedu, & Egenti, 2016,) (Orewere & Ogenyi, 2020). (Wambui, 2015), (Heinnchs, Heimulhein & Gonzalez, 2021). All indicating that when students have challenges beyond their coping abilities

and without receiving any support, it is capable of precipitating poor academic performance, frustration, drop out of school, depression, suicidal ideation and so on. Guidance and Counselling units of the National Open University have contributed immensely to the enrollment, commitment to study, good behavioural adaptation and total performance of students. This was possible due to the fact that counsellors offer guidance and counselling services such as Orientation, educational, vocational, personal social, appraisal, information, counselling, evaluation planning and placement and consultation/follow up services.

Orientation: Thakur, (2021) sees orientation service as a service which develops relationship between school and students and vice versa and it is organized systematically in the beginning of the new sessions. New entrants are introduced to their new environment with regards to the facilities available, academic and non-academic programmes, rules and regulations as well as their superiors and peers (Ogbiji, Eyo, and Oko, 2011). NOUN Counsellors offer orientation services to fresh students to acquaint them to the library and other facilities/physical structures and make them psychologically stable in their new environment for proper adjustment in NOUN.

Information Services: Ordinarily information is data which has been recorded, classified, organized, related or interpreted within a framework so that meaning emerges. Information services can be categorized into three namely educational, vocational and personal social information. Information plays important role in all aspects of cognition. That was why Nwachukwu, (2011). Stated that valid information is the key to knowledge which is a pre-requisite for any form of development. NOUN counsellors provide information services to students on programme of study, Screening/documentation procedure, course and examination procedures, adjustment choices, how to use the library facilities, ODL mode of studies and so on. This enables

the students to have first class data so that they can make informed decisions and choices.

Educational Guidance Services: Effective counselling program is important in improving the students' achievement (Bogba, 2012). Okirigwe, (2020), emphasized that counselling play active role in dealing with the emotional and psychological problems that could mar the academic progress of the students. Ondima, Mokogi, Samson & Osoro, (2013) also agree that guidance and counselling boots students' academic, career social and personal skills. Ideally, well-trained counsellors should be available in each institution of the federation to deal with various aspects of the students' problems and this presupposes the establishment of guidance and counselling from the primary to tertiary level (Adeyemo, 2014). NOUN counsellors guide students on how to manage their time to be able to combine works studies and maintain their homes. They also guide them on how to make informed decisions at every step of their academic and professional journey and vocation. This is because when informed decisions are made, behaviour is enhanced.

Vocational services: Vocational career guidance and counselling is the process of helping individuals to identify and pursue suitable career paths (Ravichandran, 2022). Vocational service is very important to NOUN students because the university is meant for both working class and non working class citizens. Counsellors help the non-working class students to match their potential with the type of job they are interested in or vocation before choosing a programme. Umar, (2017) emphasize on the desirability of providing adequate career, guidance and counselling in schools. That was why Skovhus & Thomsen, (2022) & Fisher, (2022) agreed that discovering and learning about various career options that align with ones interest values and skills are important.

Personal Social Counselling: Diana & Abdul (2014) opined that personal social guidance counseling services helps students develop awareness and acceptance of self and improve personal skills for survivals. This will help to produce desirable behaviours and reduce indiscipline. Personal social guidance is concerned with individual's positive behaviour that enables one to live peacefully and positively in his/her environment (Ojo & Ogidan 2014) NOUN counsellors counsel students on enhance listening and social skills, empathy and social support through healthy student's relationships. Okorigwe, (2020). emphasized that counselling play active role in dealing with the emotional and psychological problems that could mar the academic progress of the students. This will help to reduce high rate of students' drop-out and late programmes completion. (Musingafi, Mapuranga, Chiwanza, & Zebron, 2015).

Counselling Services: Counselling services are designed to facilitate self development dyadic or group interaction. Counselling is part of the whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. Weare, (2015), (Martins, (2019). Counselling allows people to discuss their problems, worries and any difficult feelings they are experiencing in a safe, non-judgmental environment (Ellen, 2019). At National Open University of Nigeria counselling services are given to students individually or in groups to enhance adaptive behaviours, academic success and proper adjustment. The counsellor does that by communicating empathy; unconditional positive regard and warmth, respect for worth and dignity. Students are assisted to solve their problems and make informed decisions within ODL mode of learning.

Appraisal Services: This service is geared towards collection of student's data which are analyzed so as to understand the students as well as help the students to understand themselves. (Fafunwa & Akinpelu, (2008). Such data will help counsellors trace

students who have problems and are struggling with them. The problems are explained to the students in ways they will understand and how they will go about resolving them. If the student knows and understands his or her aptitudes, abilities, interests, strengths and weaknesses he or she can make reasonable choice from different alternatives at his or her disposal (Namale & Awabil, 2018).

Follow up, Research or Evaluation: The service allows the counsellor to see and verify whether the guided or counseled individuals or groups are coping after guidance and counselling (Ojo & Ogidan, 2014). Hence the graduate survey form used in NOUN. On the other hand, research helps school counsellors to collect relevant information that can improve student's learning and understanding (Okirigwe, 2020). Information obtained can be used for other opportunities or referral when problem is beyond the scope of the service available.

Referral Services: Most times counsellors are faced with problems that they could not handle which are beyond their scope and competence. There is need therefore to refer such problems to more competent professionals. This is because counsellor does not claim to know enough (Salawu, 2000). The counsellors need to depend on other professionals both within the school and the community to assist in the provision of certain specialized services for students (Suleiman, Olaruwaju & Sulieman, 2019).

3.0 Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. This method is appropriate for obtaining factual and attitudinal information. This study seeks to obtain descriptive and self-reported information from the students of the National Open University of Nigeria North Central zone comprised of Wuse II Study Centre, NOUN Special Study Centre Immigration, Lokoja Study Centre, Lafia Study Centre, Jos Study Centre and Ilorin Study Centre with total population of 13977 students. In the study, the sample size was

389 in accordance with Krejcie & Morgan (1970). While stratified sampling technique was used to select participants from each study centre based on the population size of each of the centre to the total population and total sample size. Hence the 389 sample size was distributed into the six Study Centres as follows; Wuse Study Centre (208), Lokoja Study Centre (21), Special Study Centre Immigration (26), Lafia Study Centre (17), Jos study centre (68) and Ilorin Study Centre (49). The questionnaire and interview schedule were used to collect the raw data. The questionnaires had open ended and closed-ended items. In the study, the items were considered reliable if they yield a reliability coefficient of 0.70 and above. Reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained indicating that the research instruments were reliable and therefore adopted for data collection. The population size and sample selected from each of the study centres was given in table 1, while figure 1 and figure 2 show the bar chart for the students size of each study centres and their sample selected respectively

Table 1

STUDY CENTER	POPULATION	SAMPLE
Wuse	7460	208
Lokoja	769	21
Special	940	26
Lafia	600	17
Jos	2435	68
Ilorin	1773	49
	13977	389

Figure 1

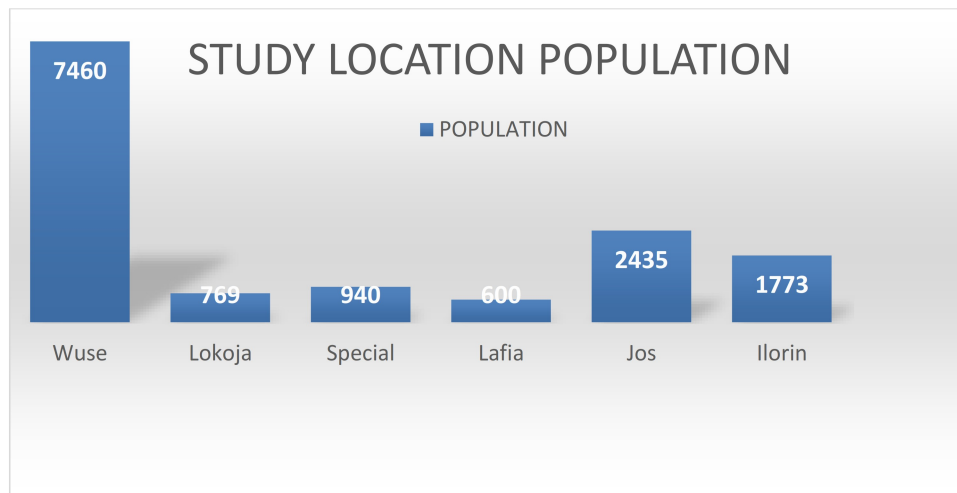
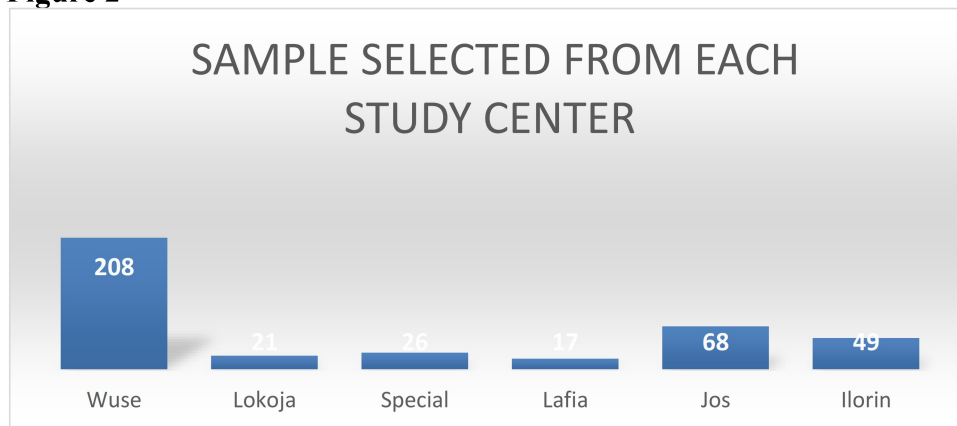


Figure 2



4.0 Data Analysis Procedure

The raw data collected was first examined and organized by the researcher. The data was then analyzed using descriptive statistics. (Frequencies, mean, standard deviation and analysis of variance (ANOVA) test) Data was presented in tables, graphs and charts. The statistical package of social sciences (SPSS) was also used to analyses of the data.

Educational Guidance and vocational Services provided by NOUN counsellors

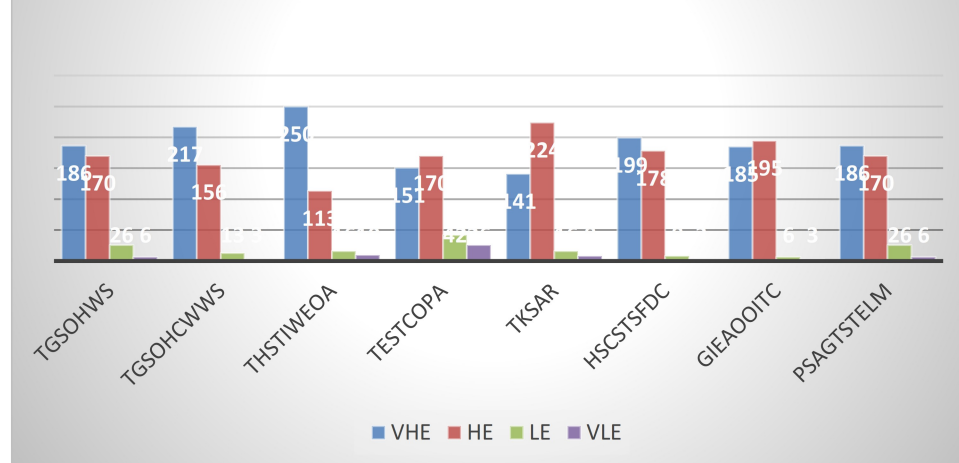


Table 2

Mean rating of Educational Guidance and vocational Services provided by Counsellors		VHE	HE	LE	VLE	-	SD	D
		X						
1.TGSOHWS	To guide students on how and when to study.	186	170	26	6	3.3	0.69	A
2.TGSOHCWWS	To guide students on how to cope with work and studies	217	156	13	3	3.4	0.61	A
3.THSTIWEOA	To help Students to interact with each other academically	250	113	16	10	3.5	0.70	A
4.TESTCOPA	To encourage students to carry out practical activities.	151	170	42	26	3.1	0.86	A
5.TKSAR	To keep students academic records.	141	224	16	8	3.2	0.65	A
6.HSCSTSFDC	Help students combine subject to suite different Career	199	178	8	3	3.4	0.59	A
7.GIEAOOITC	Give information on educational and occupational opportunities in the community.	185	195	6	3	3.4	0.57	A
8.PSAGTSTELM	Provide support and guide to students to enter labour market	186	170	6	3	3.4	0.69	A

Table above shows that the respondents agreed that counselor of NOUN provide educational and vocational services. They do so by guiding students on how to study, how to cope with work and study, interact with other academically, encouraging and engaging in study activities, combine subject to suit different career, provide information on education activities in the

community and provide support for student to enter Labour market. This was expressed in the mean scores of respondents which ranged from 3.1 to 3.5

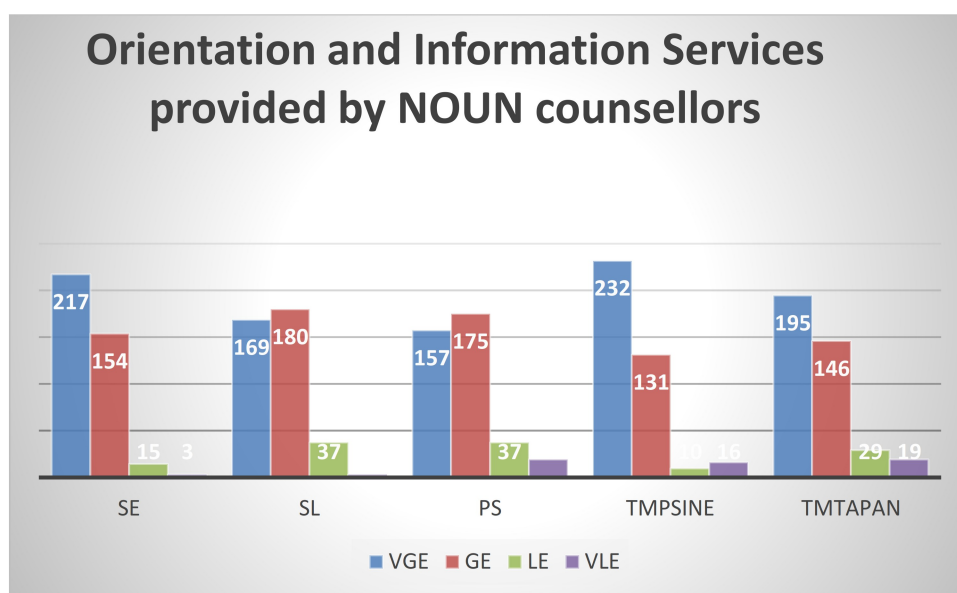
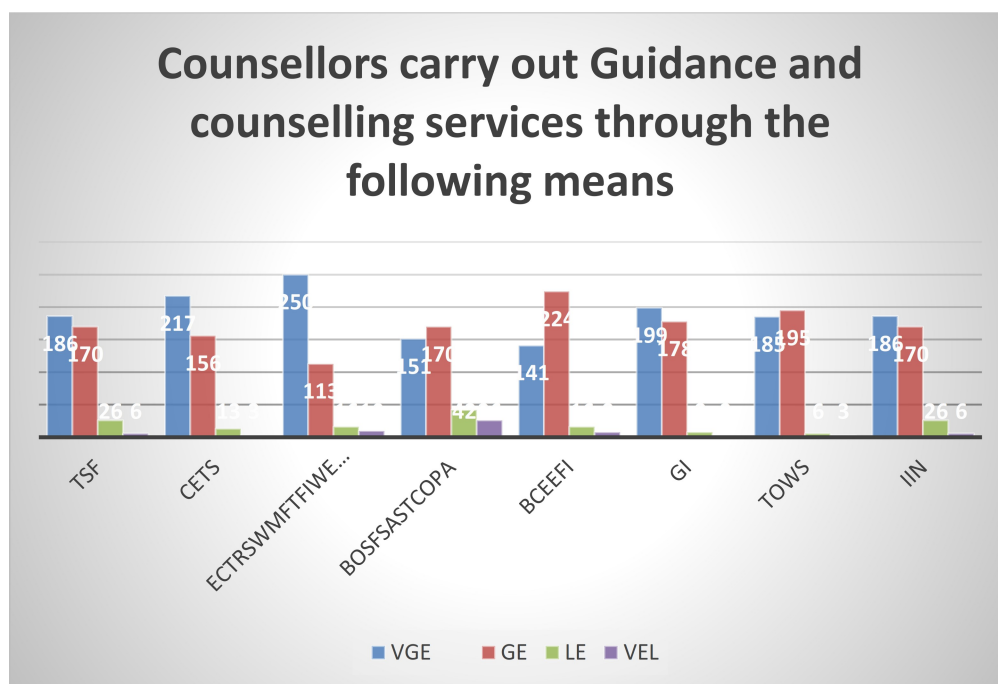


Table 3

Mean rating of Orientation and Information Services provided by NOUN counsellors		VHE	HE	LE	VLE	-	SD	D
The counsellor provide Orientation Service to enable :students get acclimatize with the following		x						
9. SE	School environment	217	154	15	3	3.4	0.63	A
10. SL	School libraries	169	180	57	3	3.2	0.69	A
11. PS	Physical structures	157	175	37	19	3.1	0.82	A
12. TMPSINE	To make them psychologically stable in their new environment	232	131	10	16	4.3	1.07	A
13. TMTAPAN	To make them adjust properly in NOUN	195	146	29	19	3.3	0.82	A

From the data provided above the respondents agreed that Orientation and Information Services are provided by counselors to help students acclimatize in their school environment, libraries, physical structure, make them psychologically stable and to help in their adjustment in NOUN with the means score ranging from 3.1 to 3.4.

**Table 4**

Mean rating of how Counsellors carry out Guidance and counselling services through the following means									
:		VGE	GE	LE	VEL	-	SD	D	X
14. TSF	Through student's forum	186	170	26	6	3.3	0.69	A	
15. CETS	Communicate empathy to the students	217	156	13	3	3.4	0.61	A	
16. ECTRSWMFTFIWEA	E- Counselling to reach students who could not met face to face	250	113	16	10	3.5	0.70	A	be
17. BOSFSASTCOPA	By organizing Seminar for students and staff	151	170	42	26	3.2	0.86	A	
18. BCEEFI	By creating enabling environment for int	141	224	16	8	3.2	0.68	A	
19. GI	Group's interaction	199	178	8	3	3.4	0.59	A	
20. TOWS	Through organized workshops	185	195	6	3	3.4	0.57	A	
21. IIN	Individual interaction	186	170	26	6	3.3	0.69	A	

Data presented in the table above shows that the respondents agreed that counsellors carry out counseling services through students forum, seminar, workshop, e counselling, individual and groups interactions under enabling environment. This was expressed in the means scores of respondents ranging from 3.2 to 3.5.

Hypothesis 1:

H0: There is no significant difference on the effect of educational and vocational services provided by guidance counsellors on student's performance in NOUN.

We carry out the analysis of variance (ANOVA) test as given in the table below

Table 1

		ANOVA		
Source of variation	Degree of freedom	Sum of squares	Mean sum of squares	F ratio
treatment	1	170917.6	170917.6	576.3964
error	16	4744.444	296.5278	
TOTAL	17	175662		

From the table above, we reject our null hypothesis and accept our alternative hypothesis since the F-ratio is 576.3964 greater than F-table 3.45 at 5% significant level. This means that the various educational and vocational services rendered by guidance counsellors of National Open University of Nigeria have positive impact on student's educational performance in NOUN.

Hypothesis 2

H₀: There is no relevant of the orientation and information services giving by guidance counsellors on the students output in NOUN

Table 2

		ANOVA		
Source of variation	Degree of freedom	Sum of squares	Mean sum of squares	F ratio
Treatment	1	191786.9	191786.9	1664.897
Error	16	1843.111	115.1944	
TOTAL	17	193630		

Considering the result of the table above, we reject our null hypothesis and accept our alternative hypothesis since the F-ratio is 1664.897 is greater than F-table 3.45 at 5% significant level. This means that orientation and information services rendered by guidance counsellors of National Open University of Nigeria have positive impact on student output in NOUN..

Hypothesis 3

H0: The means through which Counsellors carry out Guidance and counselling services has no effect on the student of NOUN

Table 3

		ANOVA		
Source of variation	Degree of freedom	Sum of squares	Mean sum of squares	F ratio
Treatment	1	171746.82	171746.82	1672.3384
Error	16	1643.178	102.6986	
TOTAL	17	173389.998		

Considering the result of the table above, we reject our null hypothesis and accept our alternative hypothesis since the F-ratio is 1672.3384 greater than F-table 3.45 at 5% significant level. This connote that the means through which Counsellors carry out Guidance and counselling services has great positive effect on the student of NOUN. This means.

Discussion of Findings

From the findings, the bar chart and table presented above on the main question if counsellors provide educational and vocational services to help students, it was evident that (186) out of the 389 respondent very high extent, (170) responded high extent with (26) responded with low extent and (6) responded very low extents on the question. The mean scores are 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.4 and 3.3 respectively. Also on the question if guidance counsellors of the National Open University of Nigeria provide orientation and information service to students out of the 389 students interviewed (217) responded very high extent, (156) responded high extent, while, (13) responded low extent and (3) responded very low extent. This was expressed in the mean scores of 3.4, 3.2, 3.1, 4.3 and 3.3. The third graph and table shows that the respondents agreed that the various means adopted by the counsellors have impacted positively on the performances of the students of the National Open University of Nigeria. In all, it was confirmed that majority of the respondents agree to a larger extent that the means adopted by guidance counsellors of NOUN has contributed immensely to the total wellbeing of the students of NOUN with the mean scores of 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.2, 3.2, 3.4,

3.4 and 3.3. This can also be seen from the validity of the hypothesis carried out using the analysis of variance table (ANOVA) shown above.

The research had unravelled the educational and vocational counselling services has positive impact on student's educational performance in NOUN which has given excellent dynamic interactive approach which aids in shaping and managing the behavior of students (Mutie & Ndambuki, 2002). The second bar chart and table also expressed that the respondents agreed that Counsellors provide orientation and information services to help students acclimatize with their environment and execute their social and educational activities (Musembi & Siele, 2004).

The third hypothesis set up confirmed strongly that the various means adopted by the guidance counsellors of the NOUN have yielded positive results on the total output and general perform of students couple with good quality behaviour.

Conclusion

The study focused on guidance and counselling services provided by guidance counsellors in the National Open University of Nigeria in North Central zone. It was observed that guidance counselling services such as educational, orientation, vocational, information, counselling, personal social, appraisal and follow up services were provided by counsellors. From the aforementioned findings, it is clear that a number of approaches have been put in place to address the problems experienced by the students though the efforts are not sufficient. It was also deduced that there are a number factors that hinder guidance and counseling in NOUN precisely. Further, through guidance and counselling students are given advice on how to deal with educational, emotional conflicts and personal problems both in school and how to incorporate the same in their daily life hence the need to examine guidance and counseling services provided by counsellors of NOUN in North Central zone.

Recommendation

In the light of the findings, the following recommendations were made: That guidance and counselling materials such as resource materials and private rooms be provided at

each study centre to aid counselling. Consequently, effective guidance and counselling programmes should be put in place as essential part of the school and provision of counselling materials in the budget. Furthermore, the University should motivate and encourages counsellors at all level to participate in trainings and workshops to get equipped with modern guidance and counseling skills.

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