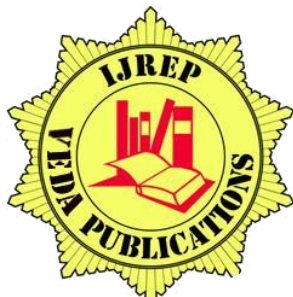# QUALITY ASSURANCE IN GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR PRODUCTION FOR TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN ENUGU STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study empirically investigated quality assurance in guidance counsellor production in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria. The concept of quality and quality assurance were examined and related literature in the area reviewed. Two research questions were formulated to guide the study. The researcher employed the survey research design. The population for the study was 1012 while the sample was 511. A self structured instrument developed by the researchers and validated by three experts was used to collect data for the study. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate and a coefficient of .73 was obtained for part 1 and .68 for part of the 2 instrument. After the copies of the instrument were distributed, the researcher was able to retrieve 497 copies of the instrument out of the 511 copies distributed. The mean statistic was used to answer the research questions after the data collected was duly analyzed. It was found among others that the quality assurance mechanisms for the production of guidance counsellors in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria are in adherence to the admission policy. There were sufficient and qualified lecturers, hostel accommodation, recommended class size vs lecturer ratio, well instituted disciplinary measures/committee and the prompt release of students' results. Some recommendations were also proffered.

Keywords: *Guidance counselor, Quaility Assurance, Education, Nigeria.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Education is a veritable and indispensable tool for total human growth, progress and empowerment. It enables man to survive and develope his full capacities in our ever changing technological world of today. Education assists man in his quest for knowledge to enable him live a holistic life, grow to appreciate himself and others within his environment.

This, in the long run will make him to be able to contribute his own little quota to the development of his community through the application of the skills he acquired while in school. To be able to realize this, guidance counsellors in schools should go the extra mile to assist the learner to become increasingly more able to appreciate his strengths and weaknesses and use same to set life-long goals that would enable him conquer ignorance, eradicate illiteracy and tackle multifarious and multi-dimensional human problems that he meets in his growth process.

In line with this, the Federal Government of Nigeria in her National Policy on Education (2013) reiterated that

> *In view of the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects, and in view of personality maladjustment among school children, career officers and counsellors shall be appointed in post-primary institutions. Since qualified personnel in this category is scarce, government shall continue to make provisions for the training of interested teachers in guidance and counselling. Guidance and counselling shall also feature in teacher education programmes. Proprietors of schools shall provide counsellors in adequate number in each primary and post-primary schools.*

From this, it is imperative that the services of guidance counsellors are really needed to help salvage and redress the mirage of problems our youths whom are the leaders of tomorrow will meet in their growth process. If this is to be, the quality of training that guidance counsellors should receive must be well monitored to ensure that it meets the needs of both the recipients and the society which they serve. To ensure this, accreditating bodies like the National Commissions for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and the National Universities Commissions (NUC) who regulate courses offered by counsellor-trainees in Colleges of Education and Universities in Nigeria should equivocally insist on the courses and credit loads that these institutions offercounsellor-trainees. It is only by so doing that the quality of guidance counsellors that would be produced will be ensured.

This is the crux of this work which aims at ascertaining the quality of guidance counsellors being produced for Nigerian educational system. This will go a long way in addressing the extent to which guidance counsellors are able to assist our youths in setting, making and taking lifelong decisions that will not only help them realize their dreams but will also help them contribute meaningfully to the growth of all that associate with them and their society in general.

2.0 THE CONCEPT AND QUALITY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality can be referred to as excellence, validity high degree of worth, grades and goodness. Within the educational industry, quality concerns itself with the state of all human, physical materials, environment and educational services put in place to facilitate teaching and learning bearing in mind the stated objectives so that the desirable outcomes can be effectively attained. The big question therefore is whether the educational inputs and processes put in place in our educational system in terms of the number and quality of the teachers, infrastructural facilities and educational services provided are able to bring about qualitative output/outcomes. It is this interaction between inputs and processes that bring out qualitative outcome. This, therefore, means that to make for quality of our products, we must have the required and right quantity and quality of manpower (of which guidance counsellors are just a part of) to man our schools. Agreeing with this, Gray, Griffin and Nasta (2000:38) listed four criteria for assessing the quality of educational provision. They are:

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1) ***Accessibility:*** With the central theme being social inclusion, this includes: entry requirements, selection procedures, fee charges, curriculum flexibility etc.

2) ***Teaching and Learning:*** This is central to quality in terms of processes. Methods of teaching, learning and assessment, course materials, students' feedback and student performance.

3) ***Students Achievements:*** This is often the most used yardstick to measure quality and most common performance indicators are based on test scores.

4) ***Validity:*** This is concerned with relevance of the learning programme to its overall objective. According to Omogun and Enu (2008) quality assurance refers to procedures and measures for

checking that set standards are being maintained. Quality assurance is a regulatory mechanism put in place by powers that be to ensure that institutions keep top and adhere to laid down policies. In addition to this external quality assurance control mechanism each institution should put an internal quality assurance mechanism in place to help put the institutions vision and mission in place. This internal quality assurance should be a multi-level responsibility which must involve all members of the academic departments, faculties/schools and the senate. This internal quality assurance unit so set up in any institution should directly oversee, monitor and evaluate not just academic programmes and their extent of attainment but also non-academic programme that are relevant to the holistic growth of such an institution. This will help in the actualization of set goals in any school system.

3.0 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Generally, the study was undertaken to investigate the quality assurance mechanisms in guidance counsellor production in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study sought to

1) Determine the existing mechanisms for quality assurance in guidance counsellor production in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria.

2) Investigate the extent of the utilization of the available quality assurance mechanisms for production of counselors in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria.

3.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1) What are the existing mechanisms for quality assurance in guidance counsellor production in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria.

2) What is the extent of the utilization of the available mechanisms for quality assurance for guidance counsellor production in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria.

3.2 Methodology

The researchers adopted the survey research design for the study. The study was carried out in all the six tertiary institutions where guidance counsellors are being produced in Enugu state, Nigeria.

The population for the study is 1,012 of which 18 are lecturers and 994 are students. The simple random sampling technique was employed to select 9 lecturers and 502 students. It was this 511 respondents that was used to collect data for the study. A self-structured instrument called Quality Assurance in Guidance Counsellors Production Scale (QAGCPS) developed by the researchers was validated by two experts of quality assurance, one in guidance and counselling and one in measurement and evaluation. A trial test was conducted using a similar population of 5 lecturers and 18 students from tertiary institutions in Delta state, Nigeria. Data collected from the trial test was analyzed using Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument. A coefficient of .73 was obtained for part 1, and .68 for part 2. The instrument was distributed to 511 respondents to collect data for the study but the researcher was able to retrieve 497(97.3%). Mean and standard deviation statistics were used to answer the two research questions.

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4.0   RESULTS

4.1 Research Question 1: What are the existing mechanisms for quality assurance in guidance counsellor production in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria.

Table 1: Existing Mechanism for Quality Assurance in Guidance Counsellor Production in Tertiary Institutions in Enugu State, Nigeria

S/N	Mechanisms for quality assurance	$\overline{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Adherence to admission policy	3.32	0.35	Agree
2	Well equipped psychological testing laboratory	1.16	0.48	Disagree
3	Tape recorders and cassettes	2.11	0.65	Disagree
4	Sufficient and well ventilated lecture rooms	2.22	0.46	Disagree
5	Good and enough desks and seats for students	2.01	0.73	Disagree
6	Preparing and using relevant posters for campus crusade	1.23	0.13	Disagree
7	Careers library	1.02	0.56	Disagree
8	Sufficient and qualified lecturers	3.26	0.16	Agree
9	Hostel accommodation	2.68	0.49	Agree
10	Class size vs lecturer ratio	2.86	0.73	Agree
11	Timely conduct of practicum	2.05	0.33	Disagree
12	Electricity	1.01	0.03	Disagree
13	Internet facilities	1.00	0.00	Disagree
14	Well equipped offices for lecturers	1.17	0.32	Disagree
15	Portable drinking water	1.13	0.26	Disagree
16	Proper conduct of examination	2.43	0.63	Disagree
17	Well instituted disciplinary measure/committee	3.67	0.52	Agree
18	Motivation of lecturers	2.32	0.46	Disagree
19	Prompt release of results	3.47	0.32	Agree

From table 1 above, of the 19 items that made up table 1 the respondents agreed with 6 of the items (1, 8, 9, 10, 17 and 19) as existing mechanisms for quality assurance in their institution as the mean scores are above the cut-off point of 2.50. They however disagreed with the remaining 13 items (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 18) as mechanisms that are not used for quality assurance in their institutions with mean scores below. 2.50. Their standard deviations are low signifying homogeneity in their responses to items on mechanism for quality assurance. This shows that their responses and scores are closely clustered around the mean. The answer to research question 1 therefore is that the existing mechanisms for guidance counsellors production in tertiary institutions in Enugu state are in adherence to admission policy, sufficiency in and qualified lecturers, hostel accommodation, class size vs lecturers ratio, well instituted disciplinary measure/committee and prompt release of results. But in terms of the overall scenario, this is certainly not adequate.

4.2 Research Questions 2:

What is the extent of the utilization of available mechanism for quality assurance for guidance counsellors production in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria.

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Table 2: **Extent of the Utilization of Available Mechanisms for Quality Assurance for Guidance Counsellors Production in Tertiary Institutions in Enugu State, Nigeria**

S/N	Mechanisms for quality assurance	$\overline{X}$	SD	Decision
20	Adhering to admission policy	3.78	0.63	Great Extent
21	Well equipped psychological testing laboratory	1.16	0.31	Little Extent
22	Using tape recorders and cassettes to store discussions with clients	3.52	0.64	Great Extent
23	Lecturing in assigned lecture rooms	2.67	0.73	Great Extent
24	Using relevant posters for campus crusade	1.05	0.23	Little Extent
25	Careers library	1.31	0.15	Little Extent
26	Sufficient and qualified lecturers	3.73	0.34	Great Extent
27	Hostel accommodation	2.82	0.52	Great Extent
28	Class size vs lecturer ratio	2.55	0.63	Great Extent
29	Practicum exercise	3.11	0.34	Great Extent
30	Electricity	1.26	0.04	Little Extent
31	Internet facilities	1.00	0.00	Little Extent
32	Well-equipped offices for lecturers	1.15	0.31	Little Extent
33	Portable drinking water	1.00	0.00	Little Extent
34	Proper conduct of examination	2.23	0.57	Little Extent
35	Well instituted disciplinary measure/committee	2.68	0.72	Great Extent
36	Motivation of lecturers	2.11	0.38	Little Extent
37	Prompt release of results	3.58	0.37	Great Extent
	N = 4.97 **Grand mean**	**2.26**	**1.04**	**Little Extent**

Data on table 2 revealed that of the 18 items on the extent of utilization of the mechanism for the quality assurance for guidance counsellors production in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria the respondents affirmed that they utilize 9 of the items as shown above, to a great extent as their recorded mean scores for these items are above the cut off point of 2.50. They however utilized the remaining 9 items (see above) to a little extent with recorded mean scores below the cut off scores of 2.50. The standard deviation shows that the respondents' ratings are tightly clustered around the mean, signifying homogeneity in their responses for the items raised. The table also indicated a grand mean score of 2.26. Thus, the answer to research question 2 is that the existing mechanism for the production of guidance counsellors in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria is being utilized to a little extent.

5.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first research finding revealed that the existing mechanism for guidance counsellors production in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria are in adherence to admission policy, sufficiency of and qualified lecturers, hostel accommodation, class size vs lecturers ratio, well instituted disciplinary measure/committee and prompt release of results. Of the 19 items only 6 of the quality assurance mechanisms are available. This invariably means that most of the quality assurance mechanism are not available in the required quantity and quality in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria for the production of guidance counselors. Well equipped psychological testing laboratory are not in place for the administration of psychological testing materials; tape recorders and cassettes, sufficient and well ventilated lecture rooms with enough good desks and seats are lacking. The implication is that the institutions studied have may failed to teach their counsellor trainees how to prepare and use relevant posters for campus crusade; the careers libraries are ill equipped and practicum

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are not well timed. Above all the institutions suffer from epileptic electricity supply, internet facilities are not installed. As stated above, this is not adequate. This is at variance with the findings of Van der Molen, Hommes, Smit and Lang (1995) who found that the infrastructure and equipment for the training of guidance personnel in the Netherlands have been religious put in place. This has helped in their production and has helped to reduce most of the problems young people face and which are properly handled by trained counselors, in their growth process.

The study also found that the existing mechanism for the production of guidance counsellors in tertiary institutions in Enugu state, Nigeria is being utilized just to a little extent. This could be attributed to the fact that nobody in true life supervises the way and manner lecturers in tertiary institutions carry out their duties and the extent to which they are able to do exactly what is expected of them. This is in line with Okebukolo (2002) who found that lecturers in Nigeria universities do their work in accordance to their own personal dictates and training. This may account for why some graduates often find it difficult to defend the grades they make in the certificates they have acquired as one can only give what he/she has. An intelligent lecturer that constantly updates him/herself will certainly be able to utilize infrastructure and facilities put in place to better the lot of the students that pass through him/her for the betterment of all and sundry.

5.1   RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, the following recommendations are proffered.

1)   Mechanism for quality assurance should be put in place in all institutions of learning in Nigeria.

2)   All institutions should have their vision and mission statement put in their web sites and the hard copies placed at strategic locations within the school premises.

3)   Heads of institutions of learning should ensure that proper supervision of work done is carried out to the letter to ensure adherence to laid down rules.

Conclusively, it was found that most of the quality assurance mechanism are not adequately available and are not also properly utilized by lecturers for the production of guidance counsellors in tertiary institutions in Enugu state.

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