

## INFLUENCE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES ON IMPROVING LEARNING OUTCOME AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN LAPAI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

**BAHA, W. MAIGIDA, ABBAS, Y. PAIKO (PHD), SALIHU YUNUSA (PH.D) &  
HADIZA MUHAMMAD MACHIMA**

<sup>1,2 &4</sup>Department of Counselling Psychology

Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapia, Niger State, Nigeria

<sup>3</sup>Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling

Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria

[bahawilliams@ibbu.edu.ng](mailto:bahawilliams@ibbu.edu.ng)

### Abstract

This study examined the impact of guidance and counselling services on improving learning of senior secondary school students with learning disabilities in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State. Four research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. Population of this study was 527 senior secondary school students with learning disabilities. 120 students were selected through simple random sampling technique. Data collected was analyzed through the use of percentage, mean and standard deviation. Findings from the study revealed that information service, counselling services, appraisal service and placement service impact positively on the learning activities of the students with learning disabilities in Lapai LGA of Niger State. Based on these findings, it was recommended that government should enforce the establishment of guidance and counselling unit in every secondary schools. Professional guidance counsellor should be employed and posted to various secondary schools in Niger State to assist students most especially those with learning disabilities.

**Keywords:** Guidance and Counselling, Guidance and Counselling service, Learning, Learning Disability.

### Introduction

The main goals of the National Policy on Education (NPE) in Nigeria is to facilitate the implementation of the educational policy, promoting the effectiveness of the educational system, and making learning experiences more meaningful for all children including those with learning disabilities (NPE, 2004). Learning disabilities are disorders that affect the ability to understand, use spoken or written language. Students with learning disabilities are often misunderstood and frequently less served by their class teachers and sometime counsellors. They face lots of educational problems (such as non-acceptance, discrimination, stereotypically thinking, difficulty in solving problem, neglect, frustration, low self-esteem among others) that require special attention. They also experience chronic hopelessness as a result of anxiety and depression. Sometimes they have performance problems in schools, which could influence their sense of self-worth, and viewing self as dumb, damaged, weak, and vulnerable.

The world incidence of learning disabilities stands at 1.8% for school age children of 6 -11 years, 2.6% for students of 12-17 year and 2.7% for older students from 18-24 years (United State of America Centre for Learning Disability, 2014). These call for serious emphasis, through effective guidance service to be placed on these groups of students to provide them with appropriate support necessary to

meet their needs and help them achieve the highest level of education. Guidance and counselling services are services provided to all classes of students, including students with learning disabilities, regardless of their age, ability, race and socio-economic background. The aim of the programme is to assist the students irrespective of their abilities in fulfilling their basic physiological needs, understanding themselves and helping them realize their full potentials (Brown, 2007). School counsellors are expected to work with students identified with learning disabilities to include them in the guidance and counselling programme of the school.

The guidance services rendered by the school guidance and counselling programme include; orientation service, information service, placement service, appraisal service, educational service, vocational or career service, counselling service, follow up service among others. All of these services are geared toward helping learners to understand their selves, their environment, their abilities and potentials.

Orientation Service for instance is provided to acquaint new students with the academic environment, exposing them to the rules and regulations guiding behaviour and interpersonal relationship within the school. Placement service involves placing students in an appropriate class or school and the right subject combination in line with their traits. Counselling Service is aimed at assisting the students to live a more productive life and self-satisfying life style. The main focus of the school counselor is to facilitate educational growth among the students. Information Service is aimed at providing the students with accurate information on educational, vocational and personal social opportunities facts that are available in order to assist the students in making informed decision and choices. Appraisal Service involves the collection of data, analysis of subjective and objective personal and psychological data about a student which gives a full understanding of the students how and how they can be helped. Evaluation Service on the other hand helps in assessing the effectiveness of the school counselling programmes. All of these services can be use by the school guidance programme to influence the learning outcome of students with learning disabilities.

Namkung and Peng (2018) defined learning disability as a specific disorder in one or more areas of psychological processes involved in understanding and using spoken or written language, which results in deficits in the ability to listen, think, speak, read, written, spell, or do mathematics. According to Donald and James (2015), learning disabilities is a generic term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders, manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities. Learning disabilities may have different forms, they may be related to listening, comprehending, expressing – oral (or through any other form of motor activity) or writing, calculating numerical problems and so on.

Learning disabilities does not include such children who have learning problems because of visual, hearing or motor handicaps, of mental retardation, or/of emotional disturbance; nor, does it include handicap caused by environmental disadvantage – environment may be physical or social or both (Francis & Silvers, 2016). While students with learning disability may have difficulties in all academic areas, major problems are more often found in reading, language arts, and mathematics (Gargiulo, 2006).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Learning disabilities is describes as a condition when a child fails to achieve learning to the level commensurate with his/her age and ability in one or more of the following areas even when appropriate learning experience are provided to him/her; listening comprehension, oral expression, written expression, basic reading skill, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation and mathematics

reasoning (Disabled World, 2022). Students with learning disabilities have a higher prevalence of poor academic performance compared to their peers without disabilities with estimate suggesting 1.8% for school age children of 6 -11 years, 2.6% for students of 12-17 year and 2.7% for older students from 18-24 years (United State of America Centre for Learning Disability, 2014). A study in Calabar educational zone found that 26% of pupils had reading disorder, and 9% had attention disorder. Another study reported that 21.08% of students were identified as poor academic performers, and 10.43% of them had specific learning disabilities (Polom, 2011).

Students with learning disabilities experienced some challenges such as non-acceptance, discrimination, stereotypically thinking, frustration and difficulty in attempting to resolve issues that are encountered in their daily activities in school. They faced unique challenges, both personally and developmentally, that affect their academic performance. Unfortunately, counsellors in most secondary schools are not provided with enough resources needed to help students with learning disabilities overcome their numerous academic problems. Many school administrators, particularly those in Lapai Local Government Area are yet to embrace the guidance and counselling programme because they are unaware of the benefit the students can gain from the guidance programme.

Despite the existence of guidance and counselling services in most schools in Lapai, the students with learning disabilities are still struggling to perform as expected. Thus, this study examined the influence of guidance and counselling services on improving learning outcome of senior secondary school students with learning disabilities in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State.

### **Research Objectives**

The following objectives were raised to guide the study

- 1.To identify the influence of information service on improving learning outcome among senior secondary school students with learning disability in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State?
- 2.To identify the influence of counselling service on improving learning outcome among senior secondary school students with learning disability in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State?
- 3.To identify the influence of appraisal service on improving learning outcome among senior secondary school students with learning disability in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State?
- 4.To identify the influence of placement service on improving learning outcome among senior secondary school students with learning disability in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State?

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised and answered;

1. What is the influence of information service on improving learning among senior secondary school students with learning disability in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State?
2. What is the influence of counselling service on improving learning among senior secondary school students with learning disability in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State?
3. What is the influence of appraisal service on improving learning among senior secondary school students with learning disability in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State?
4. What is the influence of placement service on improving learning among senior secondary school students with learning disability in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State?

### **Methodology**

The descriptive survey research design was used in carrying out this study. The population of this study comprises of 527 senior secondary school students with learning disabilities in some selected secondary

schools in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State. The sample size for this study comprised of 120 respondents. Multi stage sampling procedure was used to select the sample for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select four (4) senior secondary schools out of 17 senior secondary schools. Also, systematic random sampling technique was used to select the participants from each sample school. A self-designed instrument titled ‘Influence Guidance and Counselling Services on Improving Learning Outcome of Students with Learning Disabilities Questionnaire (IGCSILOSLDQ)’ was used in collection of data. The validity of the instrument was ascertained by three experts from the Department of Counseling Psychology, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai. Reliability of the instrument was determined through test re-test method. The reliability co-efficient value of 0.82 was obtained after two sets of scores were correlated using PPMC at 0.05 alpha level of significance, which indicated that the instrument was suitable for use in this study. The data collected from respondents was subjected to statistical analysis using simple percentages for demographic information of the respondents, while mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions set out for the study.

## Results

**Research Question 1:** What is the influence of information service on improving learning among senior secondary school students with learning disability in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State?

**Table 1: Showing mean and standard deviation of the influence of information service on improving learning among senior secondary school students with learning disabilities.**

S/N	ITEMS	N	Mean	S.D
1.	Guidance counsellor provide us with information on physical changes in our body and its implications	120	3.33	1.03
2.	Guidance counselor always provide us with information on the best way to develop friendship with colleagues/peers and improve our academic performance	120	3.25	0.85
3.	Students are helped to become aware of the many occupations to consider after leaving school	120	3.37	0.58
4.	Guidance counsellor provide us with information and ideas on what we need to know to improve our academic activities	120	3.63	0.68
5.	Guidance counselor provide us with information regarding financial aid and scholarship	120	3.60	0.71

Table 1 revealed mean and standard deviation of the impact of information service on students’ academic improvement among senior secondary school students with learning disabilities. The mean score cut-off is 2.50. All items with mean score of 2.50 and above were regarded as agreed and accepted while those items with less than 2.50 were regarded as disagreed and rejected. Based on the analysis, the results revealed that mean score for all the 5 items concerning the impact of the information service on improving learning among students with disabilities are 3.33, 3.25, 3.37, 3.63 and 3.60 respectively, which are all above mean cut-off score of 2.50. This means that information service impact positively on the learning activities of the students with learning disabilities in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State.

**Research Question 2:** What is the influence of counselling service on improving learning among senior secondary school students with learning disability in Lapai Local Government Area of

Niger State?

**Table 2 showing mean and standard deviation of the influence of counselling service on improving learning among senior secondary school students with learning disabilities**

S/N	Items	N	Mean	S.D
1.	Counsellor assists me to develop effective interpersonal relationship skills which help me to interact effectively with my teachers and student colleagues	120	3.78	0.60
2.	Counsellor encourages me to have positive attitude towards learning and improve my academic performance.	120	3.09	1.02
3.	Counsellor assists me to develop high aspirations towards my academic performance	120	3.10	1.23
4.	Counsellor assists me to develop positive study habit which helps me to perform better in my academic activities.	120	3.41	0.89
5.	Counsellor allowed all the student to visits his/her office voluntarily and discuss any issues that affect our academic and well being	120	3.26	1.77

Table 2 revealed mean and standard deviation of the impact of counselling service on improving learning among senior secondary school students with learning disabilities. The mean score cut-off was 2.50. All items with mean score of 2.50 and above were regarded as agreed and accepted while those items with less than 2.50 were regarded as disagreed and rejected. Based on the analysis in table 2 above, the results revealed that mean score for all the 5 items concerning the impact of the counselling service on improving learning among students with disabilities were 3.73, 3.09, 3.10, 3.41 and 3.26 respectively, which are all more than mean cut-off score of 2.50. The respondents agreed that guidance counsellor assists students to develop effective academic skills, interpersonal relationship skills, and encourages students to have positive attitude towards learning.

**Research Question 3:** What is the influence of appraisal service on improving learning among senior secondary school students with learning disability in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State?

**Table 3: showing mean and standard deviation of the influnce of appraisal service on improving learning among senior secondary school students with learning disabilities.**

S/N	Items	N	Mean	S.D
1.	The counsellor assists me to make appropriate adjustment on my academic activities.	120	3.19	0.91
2.	Counsellor assists me to know my areas of strength and weaknesses in my academic based on my previous tests/exams scores and help me to improve	120	3.21	0.87
3.	School guidance counselor assists me to discover my abilities and talents through the use of scores from psychological tests	120	3.11	0.89
4.	Tests results conducted by school counsellor assist me in knowing my interest, abilities, attitude etc. which in turn facilitate my academic activities.	120	2.99	1.00
5.	Test results are vital tools that counsellor use to guide students to improve in their academic performance.	120	3.02	1.06

Table 3 revealed the mean and standard deviation of the impact of appraisal service on students' academic improvement among senior secondary school students with learning disabilities. The mean



score cut-off was 2.50. All items with mean score of 2.50 and above were regarded as agreed and accepted while those items with less than 2.50 were regarded as disagreed and rejected. Based on the analysis in table 5, the results revealed that mean score for all the 5 items concerning the impact of the appraisal service on improving learning among students with disabilities are 3.19, 3.21, 3.11, 3.99 and 3.02 respectively, which are all greater than mean cut-off score of 2.50. The respondents agreed that guidance counsellor assists them to discover their abilities, strength, weaknesses, interests, talents through the use of results obtained from psychological tests which go a long to improve their learning. This means that appraisal service impact positively on the learning activities of the students with learning disabilities in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State.

**Research Question 4:** What is the influence of placement service on improving learning among senior secondary school students with learning disability in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State?

**Table 4 showing mean and standard deviation of the influence of placement service on improving learning among senior secondary school students with learning disabilities**

S/N	ITEMS	N	Mean	S.D
1.	Guidance counsellor assist me in placing me in appropriate class i.e. science, arts, or commercial class that matches my abilities and Interest	120	3.20	1.00
2.	Placing me in the appropriate class by school counsellor assist me a lot in making my studying interesting and improve my academic performance.	120	3.38	0.89
3.	Guidance counsellor encourages me to join my colleagues in group reading which assist me to improve my academic performance	120	3.11	0.96
4.	Guidance counsellor assists me in the selection of subject combination I'm offering in the school.	120	3.17	0.94
5.	Placement students in appropriate area of study minimize mistake students make in their academic activities	120	2.99	1.05

Table 4 revealed the mean and standard deviation of the impact of placement service on students' academic improvement among senior secondary school students with learning disabilities. The mean score cut-off was 2.50. All items with mean score of 2.50 and above were regarded as agreed and accepted while those items with less than 2.50 were regarded as disagreed and rejected. Based on the analysis in table 4, the results revealed that mean score for all the 5 items concerning the impact of the placement service on improving learning among students with disabilities were 3.20, 3.38, 3.11, 3.17 and 2.99 respectively, which are all above mean cut-off score of 2.50. The respondents agreed that guidance counsellor assists them to placed them in the appropriate reading group and class that match their abilities, interest, and help them to select appropriate subject combination and minimize their mistake on their academic decisions. This means that placement service impact positively on the learning activities of the students with learning disabilities in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State.

### Discussion of Findings

The discussion in this study was done according to the findings of this study. The first finding revealed that information service influence positively on the learning activities of the students with learning disabilities in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State, it helps them improve their academic activities and help students to become aware of the many occupations to consider after leaving school.

This finding is in line with the finding of Eremie and Bawo (2022) that studied influence of guidance and counselling services on senior secondary students' academic performance in Rivers State. Their finding revealed that counsellor provides information on experiences that increases knowledge of occupation. The finding also agreed with the view of Alabi, (2006) that depicts that the school guidance counsellor provides the students with accurate information on educational, vocational and personal social opportunities facts that are available in order to assist the students in making informed decision and choices.

The second finding revealed that counselling service impact positively on the learning activities of the students with learning disabilities in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State. It assists students to develop effective academic skills, interpersonal relationship skills, and encourages students to have positive attitude towards learning. This finding agreed with Eremie and Bawo (2022) who examined influence of guidance and counselling services on senior secondary students' academic performance in Rivers State. The study revealed that counsellor assists students to develop effective interpersonal relationship skills; and encourages students to have positive attitude towards learning. This finding also agreed with Denga (2001) who discovered that counselling services are regarded as the heart of guidance and counselling since it provides a forum for interaction, a link between the client and the counsellor.

The third finding indicated that appraisal service impact positively on the learning activities of the students with learning disabilities in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State. This finding signified that guidance counsellor assists them to discover their abilities, strength, weaknesses, interests, talents through the use of results obtained from psychological tests which go a long to improve their learning. This finding corroborates with Okirigwe (2020) who revealed that appraisal services rendered by counsellors help students discover occupations that suit their abilities through personality traits; test are conducted before promotion to the next class; and that school records of students are well kept for further use. This finding also agreed with Okeke (2003) who discovered that appraisal services of guidance and counselling affords the counsellors the opportunity of having insight into the strength and weakness of students.

The forth finding of this study revealed that placement service impact positively on the learning activities of the students with learning disabilities in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State. This finding signified that the placement services are very essential at the end of secondary school education, where a student needs to decide on the next step after secondary school. The services assist students in selecting subject combinations required for particular courses and choosing of the right career. This finding is in line with idea of Makinde (2004) who stated that placement services are designed to aid an individual to select and utilize opportunities within the school and in the labour market. This finding also agreed with Eremie and Bawo (2022) that revealed that counselor through the placement service assists students with class placement by fixing them in appropriate class that match their abilities and interests.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, the study conclude that Information service, counselling service, appraisal service and placement service have positive impact on the learning activities of the students with learning disabilities in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were put forward:

1. Government should enforce the establishment of guidance and counselling unit in secondary schools

and professional guidance counsellor should be employed and posted to various secondary schools in Niger State to assist students most especially those with learning disabilities.

2. The school administrators should give necessary support to the guidance counsellors in their schools by providing the counsellors with all the necessary materials and equipment needed to implement effective guidance and counselling services in the school.
3. The school administrator should exempt guidance teachers from teaching and allow them to focus only on rendering guidance and counselling services to students.
4. The guidance and counselling should be included in school timetable so that the school guidance counsellor will have enough time to reach out to students who need their help

## References

- Aremu, O. A. (2017). *A Multi-Causal Evaluation of Academic Performance of Nigerian Learners: Issues and Implications for National Development*. Department of Guidance and Counseling, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
- Brown, E. O. (2007). Assessment of the Quality of Guidance and Counselling Services to Students' Adjustment in Secondary Schools in Nigeria. *In Research Journal of International Studies*, Issue 8, 42-50.
- Denga, I. D. (2001). *Moral and sociological foundations of education in Nigeria*. Calabar: Rapid Educational Publishers Ltd.
- Disabled World (2022). Disabilities: Definition, types and models of disability. *Disabled World*. [www.disabled-world.com/disability/types/](http://www.disabled-world.com/disability/types/)
- Donald, D. H. & James, E. L. (2015). A new definition of learning disabilities. Retrieved on 12/10/2023 from <https://doi.org/10.1177/002221948702000207>
- Eremie, M. D. & Bawo, C. N. (2022). Influence of guidance and counselling services on senior secondary students' academic performance in Rivers State. *International Journal of Innovative Social Sciences & Humanities Research* 10(3):35-40.
- Francis, L. & Silvers, A. (2016). Perspectives on the meaning of disability. *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*, 18(10), 1025-1033.
- Gargiulo, R.M. (2006). *Special education in contemporary society: An introduction to exceptionality*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Makinde, O. (2004). *Fundamental of guidance and counselling*. London: Macmillan Publishing Ltd.
- Namkung, J. & Peng, P. (2018). Learning disabilities. *International Journal of Science and Research*. 2(2), 182-191.
- National Policy on Education) (2004). Federal Government of Nigeria. Federal Government Press, Lagos, Nigeria.
- Okeke, B. A. (2003). *Principles of Guidance and counselling: An outline for Beginners*. Enugu :SNAP Press Ltd.
- Okirigwe, N. U. (2020). Influence of counselling services on students' career choice in secondary schools: Implication for career counselling. *International Journal of Innovative Psychology and Social Development*. 8 (3), 21-30.
- National Centre for Learning Disability (2014) the state of learning Disabilities. <http://www.ncid.org/wp>.