

Guidance: an effective tool for learning motivation among secondary school students in Nigeria

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Abstract

Motivating students to actively engage in the learning process is a critical aspect of education. In Nigeria, where secondary school education serves as a foundation for higher education and future career prospects, understanding the factors that influence students' learning motivation is essential. This paper explores the role of guidance as an effective tool for enhancing learning motivation among secondary school students in Nigeria. Guidance plays a pivotal role in providing students with the necessary support, encouragement, and direction needed to excel academically. This study investigates various dimensions of guidance, including academic guidance, career guidance, and personal-social guidance, and their impact on learning motivation. It examines how guidance interventions can contribute to enhancing students' motivation levels and subsequently improve their academic performance.

Keywords: Academics; Guidance, learning motivation, secondary school.

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1. Introduction

Motivating students to learn in school is a topic of great concern for Nigeria's educational system today, and motivating students so that they can succeed in school is one of the greatest challenges of education not only in Hadejia Emirate but in Jigawa state and Nigeria in general. Student motivation is an essential element that is necessary for quality education. Hadre et al., (2007) argued that motivation is among the most powerful determinants of students' success or failure in school. In the learning sphere, spurring students' motivation to engage in academic activities is part of teachers' teaching-learning strategy if the teacher wants to see consistent and quality results.

For a learner to make an effort there must be a motive. Motive simply means a desire, need, urge, or drive to achieve a certain goal (Makokha & Ongwae, 2009). It is that drive that makes one do what one does. Many students due to either social, economic, political, or religious backgrounds or challenges were out of school or stopped schooling at a certain level due to inappropriate or lack of motivation to go to school or to continue with their education.

1.1. Purpose of study

This paper explores the role of guidance as an effective tool for enhancing learning motivation among secondary school students in Nigeria.

2. Method and Materials

This study used the literature review method to reach the goal of the research. This study investigates various dimensions of guidance, including academic guidance, career guidance, and personal-social guidance, and their impact on learning motivation. Data was sourced from existing literature and the sources were duly acknowledged.

3. Results

Guidance and counseling could mean different things to different people depending on the context within which they are used; for example, guidance in everyday language always connotes some form of help given to an individual or a group of individuals in areas like personal, social (giving information, direction, and advice), educational and vocational. According to Tambuwal (2010), guidance means to direct, pilot, manage, steer, aid, assist, lead and interact. However, many counselors don't live up to their potential emotionally and socially (Blake, 2020).

Sambo (2008) sees guidance as to direct, pilot, or guide. In our daily lives, we assist individuals to get to where they are going. Such assistance may be to someone looking for the way to an unknown place/venue or it could be to someone looking for data to enable him or her to decide life. Guidance therefore is a directing and piloting assistance. Akinade (2016) clarified the term by pointing out the distinctive features implicit in the word. These distinctive arise when guidance is used as a:

- a) Concept (mental image)
- b) An educational construct (intellectual synthesis)
- c) Service (actions taken to meet a demand)

Sambo (2008) Defined the term guidance as a cluster of formalized services through which help is given to an individual in situations where adjustment, planning, interpretation of information, and choices are needed. Guidance services, he further stressed, involve helping individuals or groups of people to enable them to direct themselves and relate their needs effectively to:

- i) Requirement
- ii) Demand
- iii) Opportunities of social, educational, occupational, and psychological situations.

According to him, the primary goal of guidance is to help individuals understand themselves and the nature of their concerns so that self-direction can be effective. Okon (2001) defined the term

guidance as a total program of several highly specialized activities implemented by all staff members to help the individual make wise, intelligent choices and decisions. He is of the view that each staff member spends a significant amount of time that leads an individual to understand his/her:

- a) Abilities
- b) Weakness
- c) Attitudes
- d) Interest

This understanding helps an individual to make wise and intelligent decisions and choices, plan wisely (short-term and long-term planning), achieve very well, and adjust maximally in school and life.

3.1. Types of guidance

Guidance refers to the process of helping individuals to understand themselves and their world (Mgqolozana, 2007). Types of guidance from our findings are explained below

3.1.1. Individual Guidance

William (2016) Individual guidance is tailored to an individual. It is advice, strategy, or planning designed for a singular person or thing and their unique situation. This is in contrast to general guidance which is frequently based on demographic information such as age or income or meant for the general population. The most common reference to individual guidance is about children or students. This is ideally the role of guidance, educational, or career counselors. Individual guidance can be used to refer to any advice, usually professional advice, given to a person based on their unique circumstances. This could include legal services, career counseling, financial planning, medical or psychological advice, or several other areas where a trained professional is looked to for direction in a given area.

3.1.2. Group Guidance

Group guidance is defined as any group enterprise or activity in which the primary purpose is to assist each individual in the group to solve his problems and to make adjustments. The group refers to the collection of people, the interaction between individuals, the development of shared perceptions, the development of affective ties, and the development of interdependence of roles. For example, many students and teachers/teachers at one school may gather to form a group (William, 2016).

Group guidance encompasses those activities of guidance that are carried on in a group situation to assist its members to have experiences desirable or even necessary for making appropriate decisions in the prevailing contexts. In a more specific term, it is guiding the individual in a group situation. The group could be of any type, but for guidance purposes, a group should have a common goal. Just a collection of individuals may not be called a group for organizing guidance activities. Selection of group members will have to depend on sharing a common problem, volunteering to be members, and willingness to group activities. Group guidance is used to address the developmental needs of a functional group consisting of several students to implement a program that would benefit them at all times. Students in groups with common problems and concerns are helped in groups i.e., small or large. In other words, if guidance is to be available to all, it should be planned in groups (William, 2016).

3.1.3. Learning Motivation

The term "motivation" describes *why* a person does something. It is the driving force behind human actions. Motivation is the process that initiates, guides and maintains goal-oriented behaviors. Motivation also involves factors that direct and maintain goal-directed actions. However, such motives are rarely directly observable. As a result, we must often infer the reasons why people do the things

that they do based on observable behaviors. Learning motivation or motivation to learn is seen as a mental impulse that drives and directs human behavior, including learning behavior. Learning Motivation is a willingness to activate, mobilize, channel, and direct the attitudes and behavior of a learner to learn (Kupers et al., 2023). Spolsky (2000) Learning motivation is the amount of time a learner is prepared to spend on learning tasks.

3.2. Related theories

3.2.1. Maslow's Theory of Hierarchical Needs

Abraham Maslow postulated that a person will be motivated when all his needs are fulfilled. People do not work for security or money, but they work to contribute and use their skills. He demonstrated this by creating a pyramid to show how people are motivated and mentioned that one cannot ascend to the next level unless lower-level needs are fulfilled. The lowest-level needs in the pyramid are basic and unless these lower-level needs are satisfied people do not look at working toward satisfying the upper-level needs.

Below is the hierarchy of needs:

- Physiological needs: are basic needs for survival such as air, sleep, food, water, clothing, sex, and shelter.
- Safety needs: Protection from threats, deprivation, and other dangers (e.g., health, secure employment, and property)
- Social (belongingness and love) needs: The need for association, affiliation, friendship, and so on.
- Self-esteem needs the need for respect and recognition.
- Self-actualization needs the opportunity for personal development, learning, and fun/creative/challenging work. Self-actualization is the highest-level need to which a human being can aspire.

3.2.2. McClelland's Theory of Needs

McClelland affirms that we all have three motivating drivers, which do not depend on our gender or age. One of these drives will be dominant in our behavior. The dominant drive depends on our life experiences. The three motivators are:

- Achievement: a need to accomplish and demonstrate own competence. People with a high need for achievement prefer tasks that provide personal responsibility and results based on their efforts. They also prefer quick acknowledgment of their progress.
- Affiliation: a need for love, belonging, and social acceptance. People with a high need for affiliation are motivated by being liked and accepted by others. They tend to participate in social gatherings and may be uncomfortable with conflict.
- Power: a need for controlling own work or the work of others. People with a high need for power desire situations in which they exercise power and influence over others. They aspire for positions with status and authority and tend to be more concerned about their level of influence than about effective work performance.

3.3. Guidance and Learning Motivation: Empirical Basis

Davis (2007) researched the effect of motivation, preferred learning styles, and perceptions of classroom climate on achievement in ninth and tenth-grade math students. In this study, students with a thinking preference displayed higher math achievement than those reporting a feeling preference. Qualities reported by thinking preferences appear to be more consistent with the style of classroom instruction (Cano-Garcia & Hughes, 2000), the type of tasks required (Bajraktarevic et al., 2003), and the organizational structure of math classes in which competitive and individual effort is required while using preestablished formulas and facts. Understanding the role of temperament and

preferred learning styles in academic outcomes may generate classroom interventions designed to enhance the learning experience of all students.

Glore (2011) researched identifying motivational strategies to engage undergraduate learning in web-based instruction. Increased access to the Internet and online technologies has allowed a growing number of students to take part in college courses online. Participants in these courses tend not to be as motivated to engage in learning with the same thoroughness as they do in a classroom-based course. This study investigates strategies that are perceived as motivating to undergraduate college students in web-based learning environments. A sample of 248 undergraduate college learners completed a survey to identify the instructional elements perceived as influential in supporting their motivation to engage and persist in learning in web-based courses. Participants indicated a preference for well-organized, professional-looking courses with easy access to material. These attributes and the addition of visual elements such as graphics were responsible for capturing their attention and motivating them to engage and persist in course activities. Participants also stated that having an involved instructor in the course who values the student's position and offers feedback about performance and success encourages the students to persist in their course activities. Additionally, the participants distinguished the importance of understanding the relevance of the course materials as well as the application of the subject matter in real-world situations. Students indicated that they were less likely to begin and complete tasks that were seemingly impossible. The perceptions of learners have an important message for instructional designers. Addressing the motivational needs of learners through course materials can enhance.

Jacob et al., (2020) researched motivation in learning. Motivating the learner to learn is pertinent to curriculum implementation. This is because motivation is an influential factor in the teaching-learning situations. The success of learning depends on whether or not the learners are motivated. Motivation drives learners to reach learning goals. It is important to recognize the fact that motivating learning is a central element of good teaching. This implies that learners' motivation is probably the single most important element of learning. Learning is inherently hard work; it pushes the brain to its limits, and thus can only happen with motivation. Students' motivation to learn is of special importance because students' mere presence in the class is, of course, not a guarantee that students want to learn. It is only a sign that students live in a society where children are required to attend school. Highly motivated learners are likely to learn readily, and make any class fun to teach, while unmotivated learners may likely learn very little and generally make teaching painful and frustrating. Since modern education is compulsory, teachers cannot take learners' motivation for granted, and this falls within the responsibility of teachers, parents, and friends to ensure learners are motivated to learn (Sethi & Scales 2020). Teachers must persuade learners through interaction, relationships, and adequate communication to want to do what they ought to do (Henry & Thorsen 2021; Horn et al., 2021). This task involves understanding students' social and emotional behaviors and therefore influencing learners' motivations to learn (Tan et al., 2022). This is the thrust of this article. To ensure that the aims and objectives of the curriculum are achieved, this article focuses on providing teachers and educators with insight into the concept and types of motivation, motives as a goal, factors affecting motivation, the importance of motivation, and strategies for motivating learners.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study aims to shed light on the crucial role of guidance in motivating secondary school students in Nigeria. Examining the relationship between guidance and learning motivation provides insights that can inform educational policies and practices aimed at improving students' academic performance and preparing them for future success. Ultimately, the study advocates for the integration of comprehensive guidance services into the secondary school curriculum to foster a supportive learning environment and enhance students' motivation levels.

The following are some of the recommendations:

1. Strengthen Guidance Programs: Schools in Nigeria should prioritize the development and implementation of comprehensive guidance programs that encompass academic, career, and personal-social guidance. These programs should be well-structured, adequately resourced, and integrated into the school curriculum to ensure regular and meaningful engagement with students.
2. Professional Development for Guidance Counselors: Provide ongoing professional development opportunities for guidance counselors to enhance their skills and knowledge in effectively supporting students' learning motivation. Training sessions can focus on strategies for fostering motivation, understanding diverse student needs, and utilizing innovative techniques to engage students in the guidance process.
3. Individualized Support: Recognize the unique needs of each student and provide individualized support through one-on-one counseling sessions. Personalized guidance can help students identify their strengths, set realistic goals, and develop personalized strategies to overcome challenges. This tailored approach can significantly enhance students' motivation levels and promote a sense of ownership in their educational journey.
4. Collaboration with Teachers and Parents: Foster strong collaboration between guidance counselors, teachers, and parents. Regular communication and coordination among these stakeholders can ensure a holistic approach to student support. Sharing information on students' progress, identifying areas of concern, and jointly designing interventions will create a supportive network that reinforces students' motivation and helps them overcome obstacles.
5. Student Engagement Activities: Organize extracurricular activities, workshops, and seminars that promote student engagement and active learning. Such activities can help students explore their interests, develop new skills, and establish connections between their academic pursuits and real-world applications. By incorporating hands-on experiences, schools can ignite students' curiosity and passion for learning, thereby boosting their motivation.
6. Mentoring Programs: Establish mentoring programs where experienced individuals from various fields can guide and inspire secondary school students. Mentors can provide valuable insights into career options, share personal experiences, and offer guidance on overcoming challenges. The presence of mentors can positively influence students' motivation, helping them envision a successful future and understand the importance of education in achieving their goals.
7. Continuous Evaluation and Feedback: Regularly assess the effectiveness of guidance programs and interventions by collecting feedback from students, parents, and teachers. Conduct surveys, focus groups, and evaluations to gather data on students' perceived motivation levels, satisfaction with guidance services, and academic performance. Utilize this feedback to make necessary adjustments, improve existing practices, and introduce innovative strategies to sustain and enhance students' learning motivation.
8. Resource Allocation: Adequate resources should be allocated to support guidance programs in schools. This includes allocating funds for training counselors, providing relevant materials and resources, and ensuring the availability of necessary infrastructure. Additionally, policymakers should prioritize the integration of guidance services into the education budget, recognizing their critical role in shaping students' motivation and future success.

By implementing these recommendations, secondary schools in Nigeria can harness the power of guidance as an effective tool for learning motivation. Creating a supportive and motivating environment will not only enhance students' academic performance but also equip them with the necessary skills, aspirations, and confidence to pursue their educational and career goals.

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