

Integration of Guidance and Counselling Services into Early Childhood Education in Mubi Education Zone, Adamawa State

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<i>This study examined the integration of guidance and counselling into early childhood education in the Mubi Education Zone of Adamawa State. The study was guided by three research questions and three research hypotheses. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 3,702 primary school teachers, from which a representative sample of 361 teachers was drawn from public primary schools across the five Local Government Areas that constitute the Mubi Education Zone. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Integration of Guidance and Counselling Services in Early Childhood Education Questionnaire" (IGCECEQ). The data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, including mean, standard deviation, t-test, and ANOVA. Findings from research hypothesis one revealed a significant gender difference in the mean scores of respondents regarding the role of guidance and counselling services in enhancing socio-emotional development among early childhood children in the Mubi Education Zone of Adamawa State ($P < 0.05$). Findings from hypothesis two revealed a significant relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the integration of guidance and counselling services and their years of teaching experience ($F = 195.649$; $P < 0.05$). Findings from research hypothesis three revealed a significant gender difference in the mean scores of respondents regarding the factors influencing the integration of guidance and counselling services in early childhood education in the Mubi Education Zone ($P < 0.05$). The study recommends, among other measures, deliberate capacity-building programmes for teachers, supportive educational policies, adequate institutional resources, and stronger collaboration among teachers, counsellors, parents, and school administrators to strengthen guidance and counselling practices and promote the socio-emotional, behavioural, and educational development of early learners.</i> Keywords: Early childhood education, Integration, teacher's perception, gender.
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Copyright © 2026 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited. Citation: KOJIGILI, T. Stephen & BUBA, Rifkatu. (2026). Integration of guidance and counselling services into early childhood education in Mubi Education Zone, Adamawa State. UKR Journal of Education and Literature, 2(5), 19-26.	

Introduction

In every society, education is widely recognized as a key instrument for national development. Therefore, proper attention should be given to every level of education, beginning with the pre-primary stage, which serves as the foundation upon which subsequent levels of education are built. When a child misses this crucial early stage, it may be difficult for the learner to acquire essential foundational knowledge and skills later. In most advanced societies, early childhood education programmes are provided for

children below the official school age, usually six years, to prepare them adequately for the demands of primary education and subsequent levels of learning.

The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) in Nigeria emphasizes the importance of Early Childhood Education (ECE) as the foundation for formal learning and holistic child development. Since its inception in 1977, the policy has undergone revisions to address contemporary

challenges in the education sector. A central component of the policy is the play-based curriculum, which fosters social, emotional, and cognitive skills. The policy advocates for the use of the mother tongue or language of the immediate community in instruction to strengthen cultural identity and linguistic development among young learners (FRN, 2014).

The purpose of pre-primary education in Nigeria is to provide a foundational learning experience for children aged 3-5 years, preparing them for formal schooling and fostering their overall development. As outlined in the “National Policy on Education”, the primary aim of pre-primary education is to promote the physical, emotional, and cognitive development of children. This stage emphasizes learning through play, social interaction, and the development of early literacy and numeracy skills. It serves as a crucial bridge between home and formal schooling, ensuring that children are well-prepared for the academic demands of primary education (Musa-Rike, 2023).

Pre-primary education in Nigeria aims to nurture children's creativity, critical thinking, and social skills in a supportive, child-centered environment. The policy advocates for the use of the child's mother tongue or the local community language in instruction, which enhances linguistic development and strengthens cultural identity. By providing early exposure to structured learning, the goal is to reduce educational disparities and ensure that all children, regardless of their background, have access to quality education from the start of their academic journey (Musa-Rike, 2023).

Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Nigeria refers to educational programmes and strategies designed for children below the age of six years. It focuses on the holistic development of young children across various domains, including cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and language development. Early childhood education is a critical foundation for future academic success and lifelong learning. According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), high-quality ECE programmes can have a lasting impact on children's cognitive, social, and emotional development (NAEYC, 2020). ECE provides a supportive environment where children can explore, learn, and develop essential skills that will benefit them throughout their lives. These include social skills, emotional intelligence, and a strong foundation in literacy and numeracy. Play-based learning is a fundamental component of ECE, allowing children to learn through exploration and discovery. As noted by Whitebread et al. (2021), play-based learning is essential for developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity skills. In ECE settings, play-based learning can

be integrated into various activities, such as art, music, and storytelling, to promote holistic development. This approach encourages children to take risks, experiment, and learn from their mistakes, thereby developing resilience and perseverance.

Teachers perception toward ECE as regard to their gender, years of teaching experience to the roles, factors influencing integration of guidance and counselling services in Early Childhood Education differs. Every individual participating in education is obliged to perform a maximum role and assume full responsibility for the quality of education, as education plays a crucial role in the nation's lifelong development. Teachers and parents play a crucial role in increasing the quality of education for children. Education can generate generations that are bright, competent, and able to participate in the global marketplace (Ojeme, 2017; Widodo et al 2022; Egbule, 2018; Sudaryati et al. 2022). The integration of guidance and counseling services in Nigerian secondary schools has been a focal point of educational discourse, with numerous studies examining teachers' perceptions of its effectiveness and implementation. Understanding these perceptions is crucial, as teachers play a pivotal role in the successful deployment of counseling programs within the educational system (Bolu-Steve & Oredu, 2017; Amede, 2022; Agi & Okirigwe, 2018; Dike and Onyinyech, 2024). To that, teachers who have positive perceptions of Guidance and counselling services are more likely to integrate these services into their teaching practices. This study is aimed at examining the integration of guidance and counselling into early childhood education in Mubi Education Zone, Adamawa State.

Statement of the Problem

Early childhood education is a critical stage in a child's cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioural development. Guidance and counselling services are expected to support children during this stage by promoting positive behaviour, emotional stability, social adjustment, and effective learning. Despite the recognized importance of these services, it remains uncertain to what extent Guidance and counselling services have been integrated into early childhood education in the Mubi Education Zone. While some schools may attempt to incorporate basic guidance activities into classroom practices, others may lack the necessary structures, trained personnel, and institutional support required for effective implementation.

There are concerns that many early childhood teachers may not possess adequate knowledge, skills, or professional training to provide appropriate Guidance and counselling services. In many schools, teachers are

expected to address pupils' emotional and behavioural challenges without the support of qualified counsellors or structured counselling programmes. The availability of counselling materials, developmentally appropriate resources, and opportunities for continuous professional development also appears to vary across schools, resulting in inconsistent practices. Previous studies have reported that inadequate teacher preparation and limited institutional support reduce the effectiveness of Guidance and counselling services in early childhood settings (Olatunji & Ibrahim, 2021).

The effective implementation of Guidance and counselling services is further constrained by several challenges, including inadequate funding, overcrowded classrooms, insufficient time allocation for counselling activities, absence of counselling offices, poor supervision by educational authorities, cultural beliefs and stigma associated with counselling, and limited parental involvement. The shortage of trained guidance personnel and insufficient educational resources also make it difficult for schools to provide comprehensive counselling services that meet the developmental needs of young children. These challenges may prevent children from receiving the emotional, social, and behavioural support necessary for healthy development and successful learning. Despite the growing recognition of Guidance and counselling services as an essential component of quality early childhood education, there is limited empirical evidence on how these services are integrated into early childhood schools in the Mubi Education Zone. Consequently, there is a need to investigate teachers' perceptions of Guidance and counselling services integration, examine the extent to which these services are implemented, and identify the factors hindering their effective integration.

Findings from this study will therefore provide evidence that can guide policymakers, school administrators, teachers, and counsellors in developing strategies to strengthen Guidance and counselling services in early childhood education within the study area.

Research Questions

1. What are the roles of Guidance and counselling services in enhancing social-emotional development on early childhood education based on gender in Mubi Education Zone?
2. What is the attitude of teachers toward integration of Guidance and counselling services on early

childhood education in Mubi Education Zone, Adamawa State?

3. What are the factors that influence the integration of Guidance and counselling services on early childhood education in Mubi Education Zone?

Research Hypotheses

- H₀₁: There is no significant gender difference in the mean score of the respondents on the roles of Guidance and counselling services in enhancing social-emotional development among early childhood children in Mubi Education Zone.
- H₀₂: There is no significant difference between attitude of teachers toward integration of Guidance and counselling services based on their years of experience.
- H₀₃: There is no significant gender difference in the mean score of respondents on the factors that influence the integration of Guidance and counselling services in early childhood education in Mubi Education Zone.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was utilized in this study. Study Population The study will be conducted among all teachers in public primary schools in the Mubi Education Zone of Adamawa State, with a sample size of 3,702 teachers. A stratified multistage sampling design was used to select the 361 teachers with Slovin's (1960) formula used to calculate the sample size. Instrument for data collection the research instrument was a structured questionnaire, the "Integration of Guidance and Counselling Services in Early Childhood Education Questionnaire" (IGCECEQ). It consists of six sections labelled as section A–F, and the modified four point Likert scale was used having response categories of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Experts carried out face and content validation; in addition, the instrument was pilot tested on teachers. It was concluded that the instrument is reliable for this study, with a reliability coefficient of 0.86 obtained. The data collected were analysed using mean, standard deviation, t-test and ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: What are the roles of Guidance and counselling services in enhancing socio-emotional development among early childhood children in Mubi Education Zone?

Table 1: Summary of Descriptive Statistic on the Role of Guidance and counselling services in Enhancing Socio-emotional Development among Early Childhood Children in Mubi Education Zone of Adamawa State

S/No	Statement N=361	Mean	St.D	Decision
1	Guidance and counselling services help in addressing socio-emotional issues of children in early childhood	3.39	0.78	Agreed
2	The effectiveness of Guidance and counselling services programmes helps in promoting socio-emotional development among Nigerians early childhood children in schools	3.39	0.83	Agreed
3	Guidance and counselling services enhance children's overall well-being and promote academic success	2.32	0.57	Disagreed
4	It promotes essential services to address the diverse needs of children ranging from socio-emotional issues to academic success	3.72	0.64	Agreed
5	Integration of Guidance and counselling services in schools helps to facilitate collaboration among stakeholders including counsellors, teachers, parents and community at large	3.28	0.95	Agreed
6	The intervention of Guidance and counselling services can positively influence the lives of young learners across the country	2.94	0.83	Agreed
7	The integration of Guidance and counselling services in schools helps in sharpening children's learning experience	2.29	0.60	Disagreed
8	Guidance and counselling services promote children's cognitive, emotional and social growth during their formative years	3.38	0.73	Agreed
9	Guidance and counselling services help in promoting conducive learning environment for socio-emotional development	3.28	0.95	Agreed
10	Guidance and counselling services help children to develop problem solving skills and decision-making skills	3.23	0.74	Agreed
	Grand Mean	3.32		Not Disagreed

The results in Table 2 shows a grand mean of 3.32 which is greater than 2.5 ($3.32 > 2.5$). All the items were not rejected by the respondents. This shows that Guidance and counselling services enhance the socio-emotional development among early childhood children in Mubi Education Zone.

Research Question Two: What are the attitude of teachers toward integration of Guidance and counselling services in early childhood education in Mubi Education Zone?

Table 2. Summary of Descriptive Statistics on the Attitude of Teachers toward Integration of Guidance and counselling services in Early Childhood Education in Mubi Education Zone of Adamawa State

S/No	Statement N = 361	Mean	St.D	Decision
1	Teacher's view Guidance and counselling services as an essential component of early childhood education	3.41	0.82	Agreed
2	Teacher's believe Guidance and counselling services can help in managing children's emotional problems	3.05	0.89	Agreed
3	Teachers show interest in participating in counselling-related activities in schools	3.66	0.62	Agreed
4	Teachers perceive that Guidance and counselling services promote positive behaviour among pupils	3.30	1.10	Agreed
5	Teachers are willing to collaborate with school counsellors to address learners' challenges	2.28	0.96	Disagreed

6	Teachers regard Guidance and counselling services as one of the relevant services that can promote academic improvement	3.37	0.68	Agreed
7	Teachers see counselling as a waste of instructional time	3.28	0.64	Agreed
8	Teachers demonstrate supportive attitudes towards integrating counselling sessions in lesson plans	3.44	0.66	Agreed
9	Teachers believe Guidance and counselling services help children develop social skills early	3.33	0.89	Agreed
10	Teachers are enthusiastic about receiving training in guidance and counselling	2.11	0.76	Disagreed
Grand Mean		3.32		

The results in Table 2 shows that the respondents agreed with all the statements on the attitude of teachers toward integration of Guidance and counselling services in early childhood education in Mubi Education Zone, as indicated by the grand mean of 3.32, which falls within the acceptance range.

Research Question Three: What are the factors that influence the integration of Guidance and counselling services in early childhood education in Mubi Education Zone?

Table 3. Summary of Descriptive Statistics on the Factors that Influence the Integration of Guidance and counselling services in Early Childhood Education in Mubi Education Zone of Adamawa State

S/No	Statement	N = 361	Mean	St.D	Decision
1	Availability of trained counsellors influences the success of Guidance and counselling services integration		3.31	0.95	Agreed
2	School leadership support determines the level of integration of Guidance and counselling services		3.28	0.97	Agreed
3	Availability of Guidance and counselling services principles affects their implementation efforts		3.32	0.89	Agreed
4	Teachers awareness of Guidance and counselling services principles affects their implementation efforts		3.35	0.82	Agreed
5	Government policy influences the extent of Guidance and counselling services integration		3.49	0.64	Agreed
6	Teachers workload affects their ability to integrate Guidance and counselling services in their daily teaching		3.18	0.92	Agreed
7	Parental support contributes to the effective integration of Guidance and counselling services in early childhood education		3.04	1.15	Agreed
8	Availability of time in the school schedule affects Guidance and counselling services activities		3.35	0.91	Agreed
9	Financial support from the government encourages the integration process of Guidance and counselling services in early childhood education		2.08	0.72	Disagreed
10	Teachers attitudes and personal interest influence integration of Guidance and counselling services in classrooms		3.41	0.81	Agreed
Grand Mean			3.82		

From the results in Table 3, it shows that the respondents agreed with all the statements with grand mean of 3.82. This implies that they are some of the factors that influences the integration of Guidance and counselling services in early childhood education in Mubi Education Zone.

Ho1: There is no significant gender difference in the mean score of the respondent on the role of Guidance and counselling services in enhancing socio-emotional development among early childhood education in Mubi Education Zone.

Table 4: Summary of t-Test Analysis of Mean Response Scores on the Role of Guidance and Counselling in Enhancing Socio-emotional Development Among Early Childhood Children

Variable	N	Mean	St.Dev	df	t-value	p-value	Decision
Male	156	39.0705	1.37776				
				359	19.732	0.00	Significant
Female	205	28.8537	6.35225				

$$P < 0.05$$

From the results of the analysis in Table 4, it shows that p-value is less than 0.05 level of significance ($P < 0.05$). Since the probability level is less than the level of significance, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is significance gender difference in the mean score of the respondent on the role of Guidance and counselling services in enhancing socio-emotional development among early childhood children in Mubi Education Zone of Adamawa State.

Ho2: There is no significant difference between the attitude of teachers toward the integration of Guidance and counselling services based on their years of experience.

Table 5. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the Attitude of Teachers toward the Integration of Guidance and counselling services Based on their Years of Experience

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value.	Sig.
Between Groups	10357.110	2				
Within Groups	9475.765	358	5178.555	195.649	0.000	Significant
Total	19832.875	360				

$$P < 0.05$$

The result in Table 5 shows that the probability level is less than the level of significance ($F = 195.649$; $P < 0.05$). Therefore, reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is significance relationship between the attitude of teachers toward the integration of Guidance and counselling services based on their year of experience.

Ho3: There is no significant gender difference in the mean score of respondents on factors that influence the integration of Guidance and counselling services in early childhood education in Mubi Education Zone.

Table 6. Summary of t-Test Analysis of Responses on Factors Influencing the Integration of Guidance and counselling services in Early Childhood Education

Variable	N	Mean	St.Dev	df	t-value	p-value	Decision
Male	156	39.0705	1.37776				
				359	18.740	0.00	Significant
Female	205	28.8537	6.35225				

$$P < 0.05$$

From the results in Table 6, it shows that p-value is less than 0.05 level of significance ($P < 0.05$). Since the probability level is less than the level of significance, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is significance gender difference in the mean score of the respondent on factors that influence the integration of Guidance and counselling services in early childhood education in Mubi Education Zone.

Discussion

This study was carried out to examined the integration of guidance and counselling into early childhood education in Mubi Education Zone, Adamawa State. The findings from research questions shows that teachers perceived guidance

and counselling as contributing to children's emotional, social and cognitive development, problem-solving and decision-making skills, and the creation of a conducive learning environment which was supported with the findings of Ojeme (2017), Sudaryati et al. (2022), and Widodo et al. (2022). It also revealed that teachers considered guidance and counselling an essential component of early childhood education and believed that it could help manage children's emotional problems, promote positive behaviour, improve academic achievement and develop social skills which was supported by the findings of Amede (2022) and Agi and Okirigwe (2018). The availability of trained counsellors, school leadership support, government policy, parental support,

financial resources, time allocation and teachers' personal interest influence the integration of guidance and counselling. This finding demonstrates that effective integration requires both human and institutional support. This finding therefore agrees with the finding of Dike and Onyinyech (2024).

Findings from research hypothesis one shows that there is a significant gender difference in teachers' perceptions of the role of guidance and counselling in enhancing children's socio-emotional development. This suggests that male and female teachers did not perceive the role of guidance and counselling in exactly the same way. The finding agrees with the position reported by Devine et al. (2017), which suggested that gender may influence teachers' perceptions of socio-emotional and relational dimensions of education. However, it contradicts Egbule (2018), who found no significant gender difference regarding teachers' perceptions of the role of guidance and counselling.

Finding from research hypothesis two revealed that teachers' years of teaching experience significantly influenced their attitudes towards the integration of guidance and counselling. This indicates that teachers with different levels of teaching experience differed significantly in their attitudes towards guidance and counselling. The finding is consistent with Bolu-Steve and Oredugba (2017), whose findings indicated a significant relationship concerning teachers' attitudes towards guidance and counselling. It also agrees with Amede (2022) and Agi and Okirigwe (2018), who reported positive teacher attitudes towards counselling and its educational benefits. On the other hand, research hypothesis three shows a significant gender difference in teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing the integration of guidance and counselling. The finding of the study is consistent with Egbule (2018) as reported in the present study's discussion, where significant differences were identified in teachers' perceptions of factors influencing the integration of guidance and counselling according to gender. The finding suggests that male and female teachers may attach different levels of importance to institutional, professional and personal factors affecting counselling integration.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that Guidance and counselling services play a critical role in fostering the socio-emotional development of early childhood learners. However, the perception, implementation, and effectiveness of Guidance and counselling services are significantly influenced by teachers' gender and years of experience. The observed gender differences across all dimension's role perception, influencing factors, challenges, and strategies suggest that

male and female teachers approach Guidance and counselling services from differing professional and psychosocial perspectives. These differences may stem from gendered socialization patterns, professional role expectations, and variations in emotional engagement within the teaching profession.

Furthermore, the significant relationship between teachers' years of experience and their attitudes toward the integration of Guidance and counselling services indicates that professional maturity enhances teachers' appreciation of holistic child development beyond cognitive outcomes. More experienced teachers appear better positioned to recognize the long-term benefits of integrating Guidance and counselling services into early childhood education. Overall, the study concludes that effective integration of Guidance and counselling services in early childhood education requires deliberate consideration of teacher-related variables, institutional support, and capacity building to ensure sustainable socio-emotional development of young learners.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

1. Educational policymakers should develop and enforce clear policies that mandate the integration of Guidance and counselling services into early childhood education programmes, with explicit roles for classroom teachers and professional counsellors.
2. Training programmes and workshops should be designed to address gender-based differences in perceptions and practices related to guidance and counselling. Such programmes should promote balanced perspectives and inclusive approaches among both male and female teachers.
3. Regular in-service training, seminars, and refresher courses should be organized to equip teachers, especially those with fewer years of experience with the requisite skills and competencies for implementing Guidance and counselling services effectively.

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