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Akpabio, G. S., Urom, V. U., Nyong, A. U. & Edem, I. A.

Guidance Services and Emotional Stability of Secondary School Students in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Akpabio, G. S.¹, Urom, V. U.², Nyong, A. U.³ & Edem, I. A.⁴

¹²³⁴Department of Guidance and Counselling,
Faculty of Education,
University of Uyo, Uyo.
godwinakpabio2020@gmail.com

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Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between guidance services and emotional stability of secondary school students in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. A correlational research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised 5,318 SS 2 students in secondary school in Uyo Local Government Area, from which a sample of 545 students was selected using simple random sampling technique. A structured questionnaire titled Guidance Services and Emotional Stability Questionnaire (GSESQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts in Guidance and Counselling as well as Measurement and Evaluation, and a reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha method. Data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment

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Correlation to answer the research questions and test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that there is a very strong positive and significant relationship between counselling service and emotional stability of students. It was also found that information service have a moderate positive and significant relationship with emotional stability, while orientation service showed a strong positive and significant relationship with emotional stability of secondary school students. Based on these findings, it was concluded that guidance services play a crucial role in enhancing students' emotional stability. It was recommended, among others, that Akwa Ibom State Government Area should strengthen guidance services by providing adequate facilities to ensure that students receive proper emotional and psychological support.

Keywords: Guidance services, emotional stability, counselling, information, orientation

Introduction

The secondary school period represents a formative phase in the life of adolescents, characterized by numerous academic, social, and emotional demands that may shape their overall development. At this stage, students may be confronted with challenges such as peer influence, academic pressure, family expectations, and the search for identity, all of which can affect their emotional functioning. Emotional stability is therefore an essential aspect of students' development, as it determines their ability to manage feelings, cope with stress, and maintain psychological balance. Emotional stability involves the capacity to regulate emotions, remain calm under pressure, and respond appropriately to life situations as stated by Ukaegbu and Obikoya (2017). Students who are emotionally stable may likely exhibit self-control, resilience, and positive interpersonal relationships, whereas those who are emotionally unstable may experience anxiety, aggression, mood swings, and poor adjustment.

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The attainment of emotional stability among secondary school students may depend largely on the availability and effectiveness of support systems within the school environment, particularly guidance services. According to Ukaegbu (2022), guidance services refer to structured programmes designed to assist students in understanding themselves, making informed decisions, and adjusting to school and life challenges. In secondary schools, guidance services commonly include counselling, placement, appraisal, information, orientation and follow-up/evaluation services, which collectively aim to support students' personal, academic, and social development. When these services are effectively implemented, they can significantly contribute to students' emotional stability. However, for the purpose of this study, the researchers focused on three guidance services, namely counselling, information and orientation.

Counselling service constitutes a major component of guidance services that may influence students' emotional stability. Counselling involves a professional relationship between a trained counsellor and a student, aimed at helping the student understand personal issues, express emotions, and develop appropriate coping strategies as highlighted by Ukaegbu (2022). Through counselling, students can learn to control negative emotions, resolve conflicts, and improve their mental health. In contrast, the absence of effective counselling services may result in unresolved emotional problems, leading to instability and poor psychological outcomes among students.

Information service involves the provision of relevant and accurate data on educational opportunities, career options, and personal development issues (Okorodudu, 2019). Access to adequate information can help students make informed decisions, reduce uncertainty, and manage anxiety associated with the future. When students are well-informed, they are better prepared to handle academic and life challenges, thereby enhancing their emotional stability. Conversely, lack of access to reliable information may create confusion, fear, and emotional distress among students.

Orientation service, on the other hand, represents another important aspect of guidance services that may contribute to students' emotional stability. Orientation services are designed to help students adjust to new school environments, understand institutional rules, and become familiar with available

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resources and expectations. According to Ukaegbu (2018), orientation programmes help students develop a sense of belonging, reduce anxiety, and enhance confidence in handling school life. Effective orientation programmes enable students to adapt quickly, build relationships, and feel secure within the school environment. On the other hand, inadequate orientation services may lead to confusion, insecurity, and emotional instability, especially among newly admitted students.

From the foregoing, it is evident that guidance services such as counselling, information, and orientation can play a significant role in shaping the emotional stability of secondary school students. It is against this background that this study was conducted to investigate the relationship between guidance services (counselling, information, and orientation) and emotional stability of secondary school students in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

Statement of the Problem

Emotional stability among secondary school students in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State has increasingly become a matter of concern due to its impact on students' behaviour, academic engagement, and overall well-being. Observations within schools indicate that many students experience emotional challenges such as anxiety, mood swings, aggression, and difficulty in coping with academic and social demands. These emotional difficulties may hinder students' ability to function effectively and achieve their educational goals.

Despite the recognized importance of guidance services in addressing students' emotional and psychological needs, there appears to be a gap in their effective implementation and utilization in many secondary schools in the study area. This lack of sufficient research evidence creates a need to explore the role of guidance services in promoting emotional stability among students. Without a clear understanding of how counselling, information, and orientation services contribute to emotional well-being, efforts to improve students' psychological health may remain inadequate. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to investigate the relationship between guidance services (counselling, information, and orientation) and emotional stability of secondary school students in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

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Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between guidance services and emotional stability of secondary school students in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. Determine the relationship between counselling service and emotional stability of secondary school students.
- ii. Investigate the relationship between information service and emotional stability of secondary school students.
- iii. Ascertain the relationship between orientation service and emotional stability of secondary school students.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the relationship between counselling service and emotional stability of secondary school students?
- ii. What is the relationship between information service and emotional stability of secondary school students?
- iii. What is the relationship between orientation service and emotional stability of secondary school students?

Null Hypotheses

The study was guided by the following null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- i. There is no significant relationship between counselling service and emotional stability of secondary school students.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between information service and emotional stability of secondary school students.
- iii. There is no significant relationship between orientation service and emotional stability of secondary school students.

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Scope of the Study

The study focused on the relationship between guidance services and emotional stability of secondary school students in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. Guidance services variables such as counselling, information and orientation served as the independent variables, while emotional stability constituted the dependent variable. The study was delimited to Senior Secondary Two students in public secondary schools in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Asutan Local Government Areas during the 2025/2026 academic session.

Theoretical Framework

Person-Centred Theory by Carl Rogers (1951)

Person-Centred Theory was propounded by Carl Rogers in 1951 and focuses on the importance of a supportive and non-judgmental environment in promoting individuals' personal growth and psychological well-being. The theory emphasises that every individual possesses an inherent tendency toward self-actualisation, which can be achieved when the right conditions are provided. Rogers identified three core conditions necessary for effective helping relationships: empathy, unconditional positive regard, and genuineness. These conditions enable individuals to feel understood, accepted, and valued, thereby fostering self-awareness and emotional growth. Person-Centred Theory explains that when individuals are provided with a safe and supportive environment, they are more likely to explore their feelings, understand their experiences, and develop appropriate coping strategies. In the context of guidance services, counselling provides students with opportunities to express their thoughts and emotions freely without fear of criticism. Information and orientation services also align with this theory, as they help students gain clarity, reduce confusion, and make informed decisions about their academic and personal lives. When students receive guidance in a supportive manner, they are better able to adjust to their environment and manage life challenges effectively.

The relationship between Person-Centred Theory and this study lies in its emphasis on providing a supportive environment that enhances students' emotional understanding and coping abilities. Secondary school students may face

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emotional and psychological challenges arising from academic pressure, peer relationships, and personal issues. Guidance services such as counselling, information, and orientation can provide the supportive environment needed for students to understand themselves and cope with these challenges. Through counselling, students may express their emotions and receive empathetic support, while information and orientation services can help them make informed decisions and adjust to school life. As a result, these services may enhance students' emotional stability by helping them regulate their emotions and maintain psychological balance.

Cognitive Appraisal Theory by Richard Lazarus (1991)

Cognitive Appraisal Theory was propounded by Richard Lazarus in 1991 and focuses on how individuals interpret and respond to stressful situations. The theory emphasises that emotional reactions are not determined solely by events themselves, but by how individuals perceive and evaluate those events. According to Lazarus, individuals engage in two types of appraisal: primary appraisal, where they assess whether a situation is threatening or challenging, and secondary appraisal, where they evaluate their ability to cope with the situation. Cognitive Appraisal Theory explains that individuals who perceive situations as manageable and believe they have the resources to cope are more likely to maintain emotional stability. Such individuals are able to regulate their emotions, reduce stress, and respond effectively to challenges. On the other hand, individuals who perceive situations as overwhelming or beyond their control may experience anxiety, frustration, and emotional instability. The way students interpret academic demands, peer interactions, and personal challenges therefore plays a significant role in determining their emotional responses.

The relationship between Cognitive Appraisal Theory and this study lies in its focus on how students' interpretation of situations influences their emotional responses and stability. Secondary school students may be faced with situations that require them to evaluate and respond to various academic and social demands. Their level of emotional stability may depend on how they perceive these situations and their ability to cope with them. Guidance services such as counselling, information, and orientation can influence students' cognitive

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appraisal by helping them understand challenges, develop positive thinking patterns, and acquire coping skills. Counselling services, for instance, can help students reframe negative thoughts, while information and orientation services may provide clarity and reduce uncertainty. As a result, students may likely perceive challenges as manageable and maintain emotional balance.

Empirical Literature

In their study, Adeyemi and Ogunleye (2019) investigated the influence of counselling service on the emotional stability of secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study consisted of 4,843 students, and a sample of 485 students was selected using stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using a questionnaire titled Counselling Services and Emotional Stability Scale (CSESS). The reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha, while validity was ensured through expert review. Data were analysed using mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings revealed that counselling services significantly enhance students' emotional stability, as students who had access to counselling demonstrated better emotional control and reduced anxiety levels. In a similar study, Yusuf (2021) investigated the relationship between counselling services and emotional stability among secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population comprised 3,600 students, with a sample of 360 selected using simple random sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Counselling and Emotional Adjustment Inventory (CEAI). The instrument had a reliability coefficient of 0.81 using Cronbach Alpha, and validity was ensured through expert validation. Data were analysed using Pearson Correlation and regression analysis. Findings revealed that although counselling services contribute to emotional stability, they do not independently predict it, as factors such as family background and peer influence also play significant roles.

Okeke and Eze (2020) investigated the relationship between information services and emotional stability among secondary school students in Anambra State. The study used a descriptive survey design. The population consisted of

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5,254 students, from which a sample of 527 was drawn using stratified sampling technique. Data were collected using a questionnaire titled Information Services and Emotional Stability Scale (ISESS). The reliability coefficient of 0.73 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha, while validity was ensured through expert judgment. Data were analysed using mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Correlation. The findings indicated that access to adequate information significantly improves students' decision-making ability and reduces emotional stress, thereby enhancing emotional stability. Similarly, Ibrahim (2022) explored the influence of information services on emotional stability of secondary school students in Kano State. The study adopted an ex-post facto research design. The population comprised 4,765 students, with a sample of 553 selected using simple random sampling technique. Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire titled Information Services and Emotional Health Inventory (ISEHI). The instrument had a reliability coefficient of 0.78 using test-retest method, while validity was confirmed through expert validation. Data were analysed using regression analysis. Findings revealed that information services alone have limited influence on emotional stability, as students' ability to interpret and apply information plays a major role.

A study which investigated the effect of orientation services on emotional stability of secondary school students in Osun State was conducted by Bello and Lawal (2021). The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population consisted of 3,900 students, with a sample of 390 selected using stratified sampling technique. Data were collected using a questionnaire titled Orientation Services and Emotional Stability Questionnaire (OSESQ). The reliability coefficient of 0.84 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha, while validity was established through expert review. Data were analysed using mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Correlation. The findings revealed that orientation services significantly enhance students' adjustment and emotional stability by reducing anxiety and improving confidence. In a related study by Mohammed (2023) on the relationship between orientation services and emotional stability among secondary school students in Kaduna State, it was found that orientation services contribute to emotional stability but may not have a sustained long-term effect without continuous guidance support. The study adopted a correlational research

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design. The population comprised 7,654 students, with a sample of 550 selected using simple random sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Orientation and Emotional Adjustment Scale (OEAS). The instrument had a reliability coefficient of 0.82 using Cronbach Alpha, while validity was ensured through expert validation. Data were analysed using Pearson Correlation and regression analysis.

Research Design

The study adopted a correlational research design to ascertain the relationship between guidance services and emotional stability of secondary school students. According to Nworgu (2015), correlational research design is used to establish relationships among variables as they naturally occur. This design is therefore suitable for investigating the relationship between guidance services and emotional stability of secondary school students in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of 5,318 SS Two students in public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. There are 15 public secondary schools in the area of the study, but only 11 secondary schools have guidance and counselling units (Akwa Ibom State Secondary Schools Board, 2026).

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for the study consisted of 545 SS Two students selected from public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State with functional guidance and counselling units using simple random sampling technique. Simple random sampling technique gave all SS Two students in the study area equal opportunity to be selected for the study. The sample size was derived using Taro Yamane's formula for finite population.

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Instrumentation

The instrument used for data collection in this study was a structured questionnaire titled “Guidance Services and Emotional Stability Questionnaire (GSESQ)” developed by the researchers. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, namely sections A. Section A consisted of 15 items designed to measure the independent sub-variables of guidance services, namely counselling, information, orientation services while section B consisted of 15 items which measured respondents’ emotional stability. The items were structured on a four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), weighted 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was subjected to face validation by three experts, comprising two experts in Guidance and Counselling and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation, Department of Psychological Foundations of Education, all from the Faculty of Education. The experts examined the instrument for clarity, relevance, appropriateness of language, and adequacy in measuring the variables under study. Their corrections and suggestions were incorporated into the final version of the instrument to ensure that it adequately measured social adjustment strategies and mental well-being of secondary school students.

Reliability of the Instrument

In this study, the reliability of the instrument was established using internal consistency method. The instrument was administered to a trial sample of 30 secondary school students who were part of the population of the study, but were not sampled. The responses obtained were subjected to statistical analysis using Cronbach Alpha to determine the reliability coefficients of the different sections of the instrument. The results of the analysis revealed reliability coefficients of 0.82 for counselling services, 0.79 for information service, 0.81 for orientation service, and 0.85 for emotional stability. The overall reliability coefficient of the instrument was found to be 0.83. These values indicate a high level of internal consistency.

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Method of Data Analysis

Data were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistic. The null hypotheses were tested at .05 alpha level of significance. All data were subjected to analysis using statistical package for social science.

Decision Rule

The following decision rule guided the researcher in answering the research questions:

- ±0.10 - ±0.39 Weak relationship
- ±0.40 - ±0.69 Moderate relationship
- ±0.70 - ±0.79 Strong relationship
- ±0.80 - ±1.00 Very strong relationship

However, if the p-value is less than .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected but if the p-value is greater than .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Results

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient between counselling service and emotional stability of secondary school students in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom

Variables	n	r	p-value	Remark
Counselling Service Relationship Emotional Stability	545	.849	.000	Very Strong Positive

The result in Table 2 shows that there is a very strong positive relationship between counselling services and emotional stability of secondary school students, with an r-value of 0.849 and a p-value of .000 based on 545 respondents. This implies that as counselling services improve, students' emotional stability also increases. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hence, there is a significant relationship between counselling service and emotional stability of secondary school students.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient between information service and emotional stability of secondary school students in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom

Variables	n	r	p-value	Remark
Information Service	545	.665	.001	Moderate Positive
Relationship				
Emotional Stability				

The result in Table 2 shows that there is a moderate positive relationship between information services and emotional stability of secondary school students, with an r-value of 0.665 and a p-value of .001 based on 545 respondents. This implies that as information services improve, students' emotional stability also increases. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the relationship is statistically significant; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant relationship between counselling service and emotional stability of secondary school students.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient between orientation service and emotional stability of secondary school students in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom

Variables	n	r	p-value	Remark
Orientation Service	545	.717	.000	Strong Positive
Relationship				
Emotional Stability				

The result in Table 3 shows that there is a strong positive relationship between orientation services and emotional stability of secondary school students, with an r-value of 0.717 and a p-value of 0.000 based on 545 respondents. This implies that as orientation services improve, students' emotional stability also increases. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the relationship is statistically significant; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

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Discussion of Findings

The analysis of data on the relationship between counselling service and emotional stability of secondary school students revealed that counselling service contribute very highly to emotional stability. In addition, the test of the corresponding null hypothesis showed that counselling services significantly relate with emotional stability of secondary school students, suggesting that the availability and effectiveness of counselling play a major role in helping students maintain psychological balance. Counselling service can provide students with opportunities to express their feelings, receive professional guidance, and develop coping strategies for managing stress and emotional challenges. Through counselling, students may deal with issues such as anxiety, peer pressure, and academic stress, thereby enhancing their emotional stability. This finding is in agreement with the study of Adeyemi and Ogunleye (2019), but contrasts with the work of Yusuf (2021), who reported that counselling service alone may not strongly influence emotional stability, as other environmental and personal factors may also play important roles.

The analysis of data on the relationship between information service and emotional stability of secondary school students showed that information services contribute moderately to emotional stability. Additionally, the test of the corresponding null hypothesis indicated that information service significantly relate with emotional stability of secondary school students, suggesting that access to relevant information plays an important role in supporting students' emotional health. Information services can provide students with knowledge about academic opportunities, career choices, and personal development, which helps to reduce uncertainty and anxiety. Students who are well-informed may take vital decisions, plan for the future, and cope with challenges, thereby maintaining emotional balance. This finding agrees with Okeke and Eze (2020), but disagrees with Ibrahim (2022), who argued that information services may have limited influence on emotional stability if students lack the skills to apply the information effectively.

The analysis of data on the relationship between orientation service and emotional stability of secondary school students indicated that orientation service contribute highly to emotional stability. More so, the test of the corresponding

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null hypothesis showed that orientation service significantly relate with emotional stability of secondary school students, suggesting that helping students adjust to the school environment can play a crucial role in their emotional well-being. Orientation services may enable students to become familiar with school rules, expectations, and available resources, thereby reducing fear, confusion, and anxiety. Students who undergo proper orientation may likely to develop a sense of belonging, confidence, and security within the school environment. This may help them adapt quickly and manage emotional challenges effectively. This finding is in line with the study of Bello and Lawal (2021), but contrasts with the work of Mohammed (2023), who reported that orientation services may not have a strong long-term effect on emotional stability without continuous support from other guidance services.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that guidance services are essential components in promoting students' emotional well-being. Therefore, these services should be adequately provided and strengthened in secondary schools.

Implications for Counselling

The findings of this study have important implications for counselling practice in secondary schools, particularly in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The very strong and significant relationship between counselling service and emotional stability suggests that counselling should be given priority in schools. School counsellors need to be actively involved in addressing students' emotional and psychological needs through regular counselling sessions, individual and group guidance, and intervention programmes. This implies that schools should employ qualified and trained counsellors who can provide professional support to students experiencing stress, anxiety, and other emotional challenges.

The moderate but significant relationship between information service and emotional stability indicates that counsellors should provide relevant and timely

personal-social information to students. Counsellors need to educate students on issues such as emotional control, stress management, peer relationships, and decision-making. This implies that counselling programmes should include structured information services such as seminars, workshops, and awareness campaigns that focus on students' personal development and emotional well-being.

Furthermore, the strong and significant relationship between orientation services and emotional stability highlights the importance of proper orientation programmes in schools. Counsellors should organize comprehensive orientation activities for both new and continuing students to help them understand school expectations, adjust to the environment, and develop a sense of belonging. This implies that orientation should not be a one-time activity but a continuous process that supports students throughout their school experience.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Akwa Ibom State Government Area should strengthen guidance services by providing adequate facilities to ensure that students receive proper emotional and psychological support.
- ii. Guidance counsellors posted in secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area should improve the provision of information services by regularly supplying students with relevant academic, career, and personal development information to enhance their decision-making and reduce anxiety.
- iii. School administrators in the study area in conjunction with guidance counsellors should organize comprehensive and continuous orientation programmes for students, to help them adjust effectively to the school environment and promote emotional stability.

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GUIDANCE SERVICES AND EMOTIONAL STABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE (GSESQ)

Instruction: Choose your response from the number of alternatives by ticking appropriately in the box provided.

Keys: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

Section A: Guidance Services

S/N	Counselling Service	SA	A	D	SD
1	I have access to counselling services in my school.				
2	The school counsellor helps me understand my personal problems.				
3	I feel comfortable discussing my problems with the school counsellor.				
4	The counsellor provides useful advice for my personal challenges.				
5	Counselling services in my school are readily available when needed.				
	Information Service				
6	The information given in school is clear and easy to understand.				
7	The school counsellor provides information that helps me understand myself better.				
8	The counsellor gives information that helps me handle emotional problems.				
9	I receive information on how to control my anger.				

T J E S D

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10	The counsellor educates students on how to cope with personal challenges.				
	Orientation Service				
11	My school organizes orientation programmes for students.				
12	Orientation services help me adjust to the school environment.				
13	I feel more confident after attending orientation programmes.				
14	Orientation services help reduce my fear when entering a new class.				
15	I am guided on how to behave properly in school during orientation.				

Section B: Emotional Stability

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	I am able to control my emotions in difficult situations.				
2	I remain calm even when I am under pressure.				
3	I can manage my anger effectively.				
4	I feel confident in dealing with my problems.				
5	I can stay focused even when I am stressed.				
6	I am able to relax when I feel tense.				
7	I am able to manage my worries effectively.				
8	I feel emotionally stable in my daily activities.				
9	I can manage my fears effectively.				
10	I rarely feel anxious about schoolwork.				
11	I feel happy and satisfied with myself.				
12	I am able to adjust to changes in my environment.				

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13	I feel calm when facing challenges.				
14	I am able to maintain emotional balance.				
15	I feel confident in handling life challenges.				