CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. **Background of Study**

The word Counseling refers to a process of helping individuals or group of people to gain self-understanding in order to be themselves. Burker and Steffler (1979) see counseling as a professional relationship between a trained Counselor and a client. Olayinka (1972) defined it to be “a process whereby a person is helped in a face-to-face relationship” while Makinde (1983) explained counseling as “an enlightened process whereby people help others by encouraging their growth”. Counseling is a process designed to help clients understand and clarify personal views of their life, and to learn to reach their self-determined goals through meaningful, well-informed choices and a resolution of problems of an emotional or interpersonal nature. [1]

Student counseling is a service designed in schools to promote the personal social planning and programming for students with special learning needs. This service helps students not only academically but also socially in order for them to gain acceptance into their new environment. Counseling is a very important service in the School Community. Since the School is made up of various categories of people who come to acquire knowledge in different areas of their interest, students experience numerous problems which need to be resolved. Through counseling the individual students is helped to resolve his or her problem by the counselor who renders special service in the guidance programme. During a counseling session with a student who is faced with a problem the counselor usually demonstrates genuine respect for the worth and dignity of such student. The counselor is also generally interested in the student and empathizes with him or her so that they will discuss their problems without holding back anything.  
Through counseling the individual student is helped to achieve personal freedom, confidence in themselves and a healthy self-image.

In Nigeria, the first serious official recognition was given to guidance and counseling particularly, in the 1977 National Policy on Education (NPE). This document called attention to counseling as a needed service within the system; it stressed the need for guidance and counseling in various parts of the policy. Some states of the Federation had identified counseling and guidance as a necessary component of a full, comprehensive educational system as early as in the 1950’s [2]. But there was no serious attention given to integrate counseling services and guidance system into the schools, this eventually leads to abandonment of the services.

In 1964, the Federal Ministry of Education created a guidance and counseling unit within the ministry and started encouraging the states to do likewise. This leads to the establishment of Benue State University Counseling Unit in the 1994/1995 academic session. Since the establishment of the Unit, students come more for academic and personal social problems, and in most cases accommodation is the most teething problem. These problems are categorized as follows:

1. Academic and study problems.
2. Personal – social problems.
3. Vocational problems.
4. Family, Marital and sex problem.
5. Financial problems.
6. Adjustment problems.
7. Emotional problems and
8. Religious problems.

The other problems which the Counseling Unit encountered frequently include day dreaming, sleeplessness and health problems.

Unfortunately, it is worthy of note that there is need for funds to be provided for the poor students in the form of loans as the need occurs.

* 1. **Statement of the Problem**

There are many problems affecting student counseling, some of the issues are related to the academic environment and student attitude towards counseling. Some of the problems are; Inadequate contact time allocated to counseling, students are scared to approach counselor facially, inadequate number of personnel (counselor), student may not be able to express his or her self adequately during face-face interaction, unreliable information storage, delay in taking decision by students because referencing to students information for decision making takes a very long time, etc. So, this project work seeks to develop an online interactive counseling system to helps student in their communication with their counselors, etc. This will also help the students to complain of anything hindering his or her academic pursuit, drop feedbacks as regards the happenings in the school community.

* 1. **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this project work is to develop an online interactive student counseling system for Benue State University with the following objectives in mind;

1. To develop an online interactive system that will help student in their communication with their counselor.
2. To make the processes involved in the counseling exercise very easy and flexible for both counselors and students.
3. To provide adequate enabling counseling environment for students and counselors.
4. To develop a system that will help student in information referencing for quick decision taking.
5. To carefully take care of the burden, the counselor faces in trying to do the work  
   of counseling manually.
   1. **Significance of the Study**

This study is of numerous important to the students, counselors, school community and the society in general in different ways:

1. It will also help to eliminate frustration among the students which  
   is very common in the school community and society.
2. It will ease the stress of the counselor using his/her brain trying to store information about different students in their large number and each student’s area of difficulty.
3. Using an automated system in this situation would be very efficient especially in information storage.
4. It will help students develop proper attitude towards themselves, others, school, values, interests, morals, beliefs and discipline.
5. It will assist student acquire a positive image of self through self-understanding the needs and problems of each person.
   1. **Scope of the Study**

The scope of this work is to develop an online interactive student counseling system for Benue State University.

* 1. **Limitation of the Study**

Student counseling is a process design in school community to help student or group of students to gain self-understanding in order to be themselves. This project work seeks to develop an online interactive counseling system for students. It will be developed and tested for students in Benue State University, taking into consideration students of various departments of the institution, young and aged, male and female, etc. This study will not cover other students outside Benue State University. There may also be students and counselors in this school who do not have knowledge on proper use of computer. Implementation of this system in such a situation becomes a problem.

* 1. **Definition of Terms**

COUNSELING: To give advice to another. Counseling is about helping people who want to change some aspects of their behavior which are not desirable. Counseling could also be seen as an act of exchanging opinions and ideas.

GUIDANCE: Advice or information aimed at resolving a problem or difficulty as given by someone in authority (Counselor), guidance is gotten from the word guide which means to direct, help, instruct, etc.

COUNSELOR: Means a person who counsels; counselor can also be someone who is trained to render assistance to his/her clients on the problems the individual is facing.  
SOCIETY: This is an organized group of people living together and having things  
together.

UNDERGRADUATE: A student in a university or college who has not receive a first, especially a bachelor’s degree.  
AUTOMATED: Less independent of human direction and utilizes techniques of automation.  
SYSTEM: A combination of parts organized in a whole working together to achieve a common purpose.  
PSYCHOLOGY: The study of mind and its function.  
DATA: This is a raw and unprocessed facts and figures obtained from experiments, research, surveys etc. used to develop something or make decision.  
RECORD: To write down event so that it can be remembered.  
COMPUTER: This is an electronic device that accepts raw facts as data and processes it to give useful information.  
INFORMATION: Data that has been processed.

ON-LINE: Connected via computer; attached to or available through a central computer or computer network.