

**IMPACT OF VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE ON CAREER CHOICE OF SECONDARY
SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ENUGU SOUTHLICAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF
ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of vocational Guidance on career choice of secondary school students in Enugu South. It also analyzed a clear statement of the objectives and problems involved in the study. Based on the purpose of study an extensive literature was reviewed and data was sourced from both primary and secondary sources. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. A 23 item research questionnaire was used to elicit response from the 200 respondents used to carry out the investigation. The respondents were randomly chosen out of the population, using JSS3 and SSS3 students as its subject. The questionnaire was based on four research questions. Finally, the results were discussed and some recommendations were made. At the end of the research the study revealed that there are some factors that influence career choice taking of secondary school students; and that vocational guidance has become indispensable as long as taking career choice is concerned. Also vocational guidance to a great extent to a great extent influences career choice of secondary school students, vocational guidance practically reduces the level of unemployment among school leavers.

1. Introduction

Literally, guidance is as old as man. All through the ages, humans have for one reason or the other sought guidance. Vocational guidance was developed by Frank Parsons in the year 1908, a time he was faced with the challenge of giving a name to what he thinks the school should provide as a service to school leavers about to go into the world of work. According to Parsons in his book *Choosing a Vocation*, the term vocational guidance was referred to the process of assisting people choose a vocation, prepare for it and attain efficiency and success. The National Vocational Guidance Association that was set up in America in (1924) went on to state that vocational guidance is regarded as choosing an occupation, preparing for it and entering into it and progressing in it.

In the Nigerian case vocational guidance started formally in 1959 at St. Theresa's College Oke-Ado in Ibadan by some reverend sisters out of sympathy for the products of their school. They felt that these secondary school leavers would have problems in seeking for admission for further studies, looking for employment and adjusting to the hard conditions of the society after leaving school. They then invited some resource persons on various fields on the world of work and personal adjustment in the society.

In Nigeria, students lack adequate occupational information before they enter into occupations. In some cases, the students concern themselves with reading up courses in the schools without due regard to the marketability and employability of the graduates in the field.

Career choice is not one that is made abruptly. It is a continuous process. Career is a series of jobs that a person has in a particular area of work, usually involving more responsibilities as time passes (*Okonkwo, 2011*). According to Alutu (*2001*), career development and choice should be initiated as early as the nursery school years through the primary, secondary and to the tertiary school level. One's career choice is mostly influenced by parents, friends, relatives, teachers, printed information, etc.

It seems making appropriate career choice has become an uphill task among secondary school students in Enugu South; consequently vocational guidance as an area of guidance and counselling has been introduced in secondary schools to help tackle this problem. Vocational guidance serves as a pivotal tool in molding, rebuilding and assuaging the risk of making

wrong career choice by secondary school students. Career selection is one of many important choices students will make in determining future plans; this decision will impact them throughout their lives. The essence of who the student is will revolve around what the student wants to do with their life-long work. Indeed vocational and career related issues are salient across different cultures and nationalities *Leung (2004)*. In an age of economic globalization, all individuals are affected by an array of work related concern; some of these concerns are unique to certain cultures, but others are not too many cultural groups.

Research shows that secondary school students in Enugu south and Nigeria generally are faced with problem of vocational or career choice towards the end of their secondary school education; this is as a result of the poor form of guidance programs being run in secondary schools. It is therefore the opinion of this study to stress the importance of vocational and career programme in guidance and counseling; which is organized in secondary school level; as to facilitate in the students the idea of vocational and career readiness that will eventually transform to the vocational maturity of the students

Guidance counsellors in Enugu south secondary schools to a good extent have done a great work in reducing the risk of wrong career choice taking by students; this they have achieved through; organizing career conferences, career day in secondary schools field trip, display of vital information about career opportunities and available higher institutions on bulletin boards; individual and group guidance has been employed to ensure thorough implementation of vocational guidance. *Splaver (2007)* went on to say “it is important for you to have a good understanding of yourself and your personality, if you are to make intelligent career plans”.

There is a saying that “the blind cannot lead the blind” not just anybody can give proper vocational guidance; therefore for the students to make the right career choices, professional vocational advice is required.

Today youths in Nigeria are gearing up in an increasing complicated and fast changing society; and the resultant effect is a complex need for personal – social adjustment, economic and vocational awareness among many youths; *Adegoke (2004)*. With an increase in changes in the world of work and number of opportunities in the society and market; the need for vocational guidance has also increased manifold. People have begun to realize the fact that

not all can become engineers, doctors, lawyers. Rather they can explore other fields that concur with their interests and abilities.

Vocational guidance is essential in secondary schools when the students are not sure about choosing a suitable career option. It is important to know that a person's career determines his course of life. While a good decision at the right point in time can make the student's life pleasant; a wrong one can as well ruin it.

Despite having a clear idea of what they want to achieve in life, some students do not know the career path they need to follow to have requisite academic qualification to join a particular course. Vocational counseling can help the student's clear doubts by giving them a clear cut view of what they can expect from various educational courses.

In particular, Nigeria like many other developing countries is faced with the problem of inability of her educators to relate education to employment opportunities; Okoye (2000). This is apparently in vogue in the nation's secondary schools where many teachers are said to be incapable of assisting the students to perceive a vivid picture of the world of work. Olayinka (2001) opines that obtaining good grades in examination to acquire certificate either for admission into higher institutions or obtain good employment is the main goal of education to many people; rather than acquisition of knowledge and skills through studying .

Even with limited subject options offered by many Nigerian secondary schools; the students seem to have difficulty choosing subjects to study for the West African School Certificate Examination because their teachers cannot help them secure relevant information on career options. Many students do not know the relationship between the subjects they are being taught in school and their dream careers. It is therefore important to stress on the need for vocational guidance in secondary schools.

Statement of the Problem

The high rate of unemployment and underemployment among school leavers in Nigeria is a serious issue for concern. It is contended that one of the contributing factors of unemployment cum under employment among school leavers in the country could be inadequate or lack of vocational guidance to students while in and out of school. In other words they are not given sufficient and relevant vocational or occupational information that

will enable them graduate from school to a suitable occupation. It is through a graduates occupation that he/she is expected to serve the country, contribute and at the same time benefit from economic growth and national development. In a case

where is not properly guided on career decision making by a professional guidance counselor; it would not be possible for such individual to contribute to economic and national development after graduation.

On another view point, guidance and counseling programmes in secondary schools has not been given the proper attention it deserves; and until the proper attention is given to this form of education programme, majority of secondary school students will continue to have difficulty in career decision making. Okolie (2014) asserts that many secondary school students lack ideas on which course to study in the higher education institution after leaving secondary school. Also the list of vocations appear inexhaustible, likewise the variety of persons with varied attributes; and certainly not all persons are suitable for all vocations because every vocation needs certain background, preparation and aptitude; therefore only those that have the requirements succeed.

More so, the advent of civilization, industrialization and technological development opened a wide variety of new occupations; the problem of selecting occupation by students becomes complex and difficult.

Purpose of the Study

This study is basically aimed at probing into the impact vocational guidance has been able to make in the career decision taking of secondary school students in Enugu south. Specifically, the study intends

1. To determine the extent to which vocational guidance has been able to influence career choice of secondary school students in Enugu south.
2. To determine the extent to which vocational guidance can practically reduce the level of unemployment among school leavers.
3. To determine the factors influencing career decision making of secondary school students.

4. To determine the factors that affect the effective implementation of vocational guidance in secondary schools in Enugu south..

Research questions

1. To what extent has vocational guidance been able to influence career decision making of secondary school students?
2. How does vocational guidance reduce the level of unemployment among school leavers?
3. What factors influence the career decision making of secondary school students?
4. What are the factors that influence or affect the effective implementation of vocational guidance in secondary school leavers?

2. Research Methodology

Design of the study

The design adopted for the study is sample survey. A survey research is defined as one in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. (Nworgu, 2015).

Area of the Study

The study was carried out in selected government owned secondary schools in Enugu-South local government area of Enugu State. The location was chosen by the researcher because it was familiar to the researcher and more convenient in collection of data. The research covered secondary schools where guidance and counseling program is being implemented.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises ten secondary schools in Enugu South; which consists of J.S.S III Students and S.S.S III Students about to write their certificate examination. A total number of two hundred students were selected for this study.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Random sampling technique was used in this study to draw twenty (20) students each from the ten selected secondary schools in Enugu South. From J.S.S III 10 students were randomly picked from each class in the population and from S.S.S III 5 students from art class and (5)

five students from science class were randomly selected from each of the schools making a total of 20; for the study because they are the ones faced with career choice problems.

Instrument for Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was designed by the researcher for the entire respondents; which appeared in two sections A and B. “A” sought for personal information from the respondents. Section “B” elicited responses based on the research questions.

Validation of Research Instrument

The researcher consulted 2 experts in guidance and counseling department and 1 in Measurement and Evaluation for proper examination and validation. The corrections offered by them were taken into account.

Reliability of Instrument

To establish the reliability of the instrument, the researcher adopted a test re-test procedure within a period of two weeks and correlated the sets of responses.

Method of Data collection

The researcher administered the questionnaire to the respondents on the next visit to the schools. The researcher created a rapport with the principal, teachers and students with a view of verbally explaining the purpose of the study.

The researcher distributed about 300 questionnaires and collected on the next visit to make sure that the respondent from the sample population were accurate. The researcher got back 222 questionnaires.

Method of Data Analysis

The information relating to the research question were collected and presented in chapter four for analysis and presented in chapter four for analysis and interpretation. The data was analysed using mean scores and standard deviation; in order to interpret the data obtained and to answer the research questions. The interpretation of data was based on the following score intervals:

- 1. Strongly Agree → SA = 4
- 2. Agree → A = 3
- 3. Disagree → D = 2
- 4. Strongly Disagree → SD = 1

In analyzing the data mean and standard deviation was used.

Formula for Mean Deviation = Efx/N

Decision Rule: for a decision to be taken, the mean was calculated as: $4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = 10 / 4 = 2.5$. Therefore any value above 2.5 is agreed, while any value that is less than 2.5 or 50% is disagreed.

3. Discussion of Result

Research Question 1

To what extent has vocational guidance been able to influence career decision making of secondary school students?

Table 1: Extent to which vocational guidance has influenced career choice of Secondary School Students.

SN	Item Description	(4) SA	(3) A	(2) D	(1) SD	N	FX	X	Decision
1	Vocational guidance helps students make career choices that are in line with their interests, aptitude and abilities.	90	60	40	10	200	630	3.15	Agree
2	Vocational guidance would go a long way in giving the students the confidence to decide what they want to do in future without fear or doubt.	100	42	40	18	200	622	3.11	Agree

3	With the help of vocational guidance students can relate education to employment opportunities.	85	65	35	15	200	620	3.1	Agree
4	Vocation guidance helps the students to realize they can explore other occupational fields apart from popularly known ones.	70	75	40	15	200	600	3.0	Agree
5	Vocational guidance creates occupational information that is relevant to the career choice of students.	120	60	15	5	200	695	3.46	Strongly agree
6	Vocational guidance equips parents and teachers with necessary skills on collection of job information.	88	76	20	16	200	636	3.18	Agree

Mean cluster A:

From table 1 above, it could be observed that the grand mean is 3.46 (strongly agree) going by the decision rule as shown in chapter 3; the items are to a great extent true of the influence of vocational guidance on career choice.

Research Question 2

How does vocational guidance reduce the level of unemployment among secondary school leavers?

Table 2: How vocational guidance reduces the level of unemployment among secondary school leavers.

SN	Item Description	(4) SA	(3) A	(2) D	(1) SD	N	FX	X	Decision
7	Vocational guidance can reduce unemployment by preparing people for the job they can do.	130	65	4	1	200	724	3.62	Strongly Agree
8	Vocational guidance gives the proper sense of direction as regards the suitable job for one to chose	79	71	38	12	200	617	3.8	Agree
9	Vocational guidance helps students to get trained on areas that lead to employment	97	80	13	10	200	664	3.32	Strongly Agree
10	Vocational guidance reduces unemployment by helping students know the employment opportunities open to them	104	72	4	20	200	660	3.3	Agree
11	Vocational guidance creates self knowledge and wise decision in making career choice.	86	93	15	4	200	657	3.28	Agree

Mean Cluster B

Results on table II above shows that vocational guidance practically reduces the rate of unemployment among secondary school leavers. This was shown by a mean cluster of 3.62.

Research Question 3

What are the factors influencing career decision making of secondary school students?

Table 3; Factors influencing career choice or decision making of secondary school students.

SN	Item Decision	SA	A	D	SD	N	FX	X	Decision
12	The environment of the individual	113	77	8	2	200	701	3.50	Strongly Agree
13	Personality and the students' perception of themselves	80	70	45	5	200	625	3.12	Agree
14	Educational background of parents	95	65	33	7	200	681	3.40	Strongly Agree
15	The income level of the student's family	100	60	25	15	200	645	3.25	Agree
16	The ideal job mindset held by individuals	88	72	27	13	200	635	3.17	Agree
17	Social class and background of the individual	99	58	23	20	200	659	3.29	Agree

Mean Cluster C

Results on table III above show the highest mean as 3.50 according to the mean scores. Therefore it is glaringly obvious that these factors as displayed on table III influences the career decision making of secondary school students.

Research Question 4

What factors affect the effective implementation of vocational guidance in secondary schools?

Table 4: Factors that affect the effective implementation of vocational guidance in secondary schools

SN	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	N	FX	X	Decision
18	Inadequate funding of guidance services in secondary school	115	80	4	1	200	709	3.54	Strongly Agree
19	Acute shortage of guidance	92	70	28	10	200	644	3.22	Agree

	counselors in secondary schools								
20	Students negative attitude towards guidance and counseling	80	67	43	10	200	626	3.13	Agree
21	Inadequate time for guidance services and activities in schools	100	72	22	6	200	666	3.33	Strongly Agree
22	Difficulty in obtaining information from employers of labor and other agencies	97	80	13	10	200	664	3.32	Strongly Agree
23	Guidance counselors engage in other school activities like teaching	80	58	40	12	200	616	3.08	Agree

Mean Cluster D

Table 4 shows that the factors listed above affect the effective implementation of vocational guidance program in secondary schools. This is evident from the mean scores above 2.50 which is the decision rule.

4. Recommendation

The following recommendations were made based on the research findings:

1. Secondary school students should be exposed to the importance of guidance services and what counseling is all about in order for them to make good career decisions.
2. Students should be enlightened through vocational guidance on the available and the right career path to take. This in essence would help reduce the level of unemployment among school leavers.
3. Students should be trained properly on areas that can lead them to employment. This can be achieved by developing the three domains of the individual; which is psychomotor, affective and the cognitive domain.
4. The researcher also recommends that proper and adequate time should be created for guidance and counseling activities in secondary schools. If possible, guidance and counseling should be included in the school's curriculum.

5. Guidance and counseling programme should be well funded by government and also the full support of the secondary school principals is being implored in order to take guidance programme to its apogee.

5. Conclusion

The research investigated the impact of vocational guidance on career choice of secondary school students in Enugu south. A twenty three (23) item research questionnaire was used to elicit response from the respondents who were used to carry out the investigation. This number was randomly chosen for out of the population; using JSSIII and SSIII students as its subjects. The questionnaire was based on four research questions.

Finally, the results were discussed and some recommendations were made, At the end of the research, the study revealed that; vocational guidance has become indispensable as long as making career choice is concerned. Also vocational guidance to a great extent influences career choice of secondary school students, vocational guidance practically reduces the level of unemployment among school leavers.

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