

***Vocational Guidance and Counselling Services and Entrepreneurship Skills
Development among First Year Faculty of Education Students in the
University of Calabar***

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Abstract

The study investigated the Influence of Guidance and Counselling services and entrepreneurship skills development among first year faculty of education students. One research question guided the study. Survey research design was employed in the study. The total respondents for the study were 242 first year Faculty of Education students and 10 lecturers. A structured questionnaire based on a four point scale was used as the data collection instrument. The questionnaire was validated by three experts from Measurement and Evaluation. Cronbach Alpha reliability method was used and a reliability coefficient of 0.912 value was obtained as the reliability. The data gathered was analysed using mean and standard derivation to answer the research question. Findings of the study revealed that Guidance and Counselling services motivate first year education students' interest toward development of entrepreneurial skills. The study recommended among others that vocational guidance and counselling service should be rendered to youths before engagement or inclusion in entrepreneurship education to enable them choose appropriate skills in line with their abilities and interest.

Keywords: Career, Guidance, Vocational, Information, Entrepreneurship, Skills

Introduction

In society today, it is common to find adolescents and young adults who lack understanding and knowledge of vocations, entrepreneurship education or needed skills to enable them attain beneficial and self-sufficient careers. Even at university level, many young adults are still completely dependent on their parents and significant others for financial support and training with no skills to depend upon. This indeed has become a big burden and a huge challenge in the lives of young adult undergraduate students in Calabar. These challenges, according to Denga and Ekoja (2008), are perceived situations and

circumstances that call for interventions. Many of these students are worried and eager about entry into the occupational world, where the availability of a rewarding or paid employment has become elusive bearing in mind the insufficient nature of available job vacancies to absorb this multitude of young people graduating from tertiary education each year. This calls for vocational counselling education to prepare these young adults for skill acquisition and entrepreneurship education to enable them have a seamless transition into the world of work.

As observed the world over, humans are constantly thirsting for knowledge and education which are instruments for effective national development. Therefore a national policy on entrepreneurship education could be a boost to bring about interventions to help young adults build vocational capacities and empowerment, as Vocational Guidance and Counselling becomes a handy instrument to drive these needed vocational interventions for effective entrepreneurship education for the youth population. Nwachukwu (2007) defines Guidance and Counselling as formal and systematic process of organized services rendered to an individual or group to assist them acquire accurate knowledge of self and situation, skills for self-appraisal to enable them maximize capabilities for appropriate decision-making to achieve the best self-realization at any given time in education world of work and the society.

The common trend the world over now is education for enterprise; education therefore is the hub of entrepreneurship and sustainable development. The consideration and application of Guidance and Counselling services in synergy with entrepreneurial development boost and make effective the aim of maximizing human capital development. This would afford the youth a better and robust preparedness for entrepreneurial education, and to counsel and encourage youths to return to and imbibe practical apprenticeship schemes as a sure way for acquisition of practical skills and hands on experiences.

Many first year education students are still not abreast with their abilities and eventual career path thus are in the exploration stage of career development as posited in Super's career development theory (Shertzer & Stone, 1981). This stage, which is between 15 and 19 years, is when adolescents and young adults explore different occupational alternatives and match them with the knowledge acquired about various occupations. It is therefore a very critical period for adolescent and young adult's career preparation and exploration; this period requires appropriate and effective vocational guidance and counselling to enable young adults understand their abilities and interest to enable them attain vocations and become entrepreneurs for self-dependence and national development.

Vocational guidance therefore, is focused upon the choice of occupation and is distinguished from educational guidance, which focuses upon choice of courses of

study. Career guidance brings the two together and stresses the interaction between learning and work (Bezanson & Turcotte, 2004). Career guidance has been identified as a key focus in addressing this mismatch between the needs of labour market and the products of the educational and training system thereby dealing with unemployment and improving labour mobility (Balasuriya & Hughes, 2003). Damsa (2004) posited that Vocational guidance affords the students with knowledge to engage in ventures, creations and nurture entrepreneurship successfully and that one major goal of Guidance and Counselling in Nigeria is for Vocational guidance. Abosede, Onyenuga and Owoyele (2012) asserted also that effective and continuous Vocational guidance promotes entrepreneurship and eradicates unemployment.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2004) defines vocational guidance as services and activities intended to assist individuals of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training, occupational choices and to manage their careers. This definition includes making information about the labour market and about educational and employment opportunities more accessible by organising it, systematizing it and having it available when and where people need it. It also includes assisting people to reflect on their aspirations, interests, competencies, personal attributes, qualification and abilities to match these with available training and employment opportunities. Vocational guidance, according to International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance, plays a key role in helping labour market work and education systems meet their goals (IAEVG, 1992).

However, a mismatch has been evident between the skills imparted by the national education system and those demanded by the workplace. Vocational guidance therefore is widely accepted as a powerful and effective method of helping to bridge the gap between education and the world of work, as well as between school and society (Hansen, 2006). As it assist young people to make appropriate and judicious educational choices that will enable them to develop their entrepreneurial skills and potential and to have access to employment opportunities that are compatible with their interests and abilities. It reinforces confidence and positive attitudes, to derive fulfilment from their chosen areas of learning and work and most importantly, to inculcate an eagerness for lifelong learning. The potential impacts of such efforts include reducing youth unemployment and raising income, thereby reducing poverty. According to Jarvis (2011), Vocational guidance assists the young ones in selecting their career in line with their choice and interest thereby making them healthy, self-reliant, resilient individuals and develop entrepreneurial skills. It enables individuals to assess the following areas while choosing a career (Francis, 2011): Aptitude, Skills, Personality, Interests, Needs and Priorities.

Entrepreneurship involves the process of designing, handling and running of new business, often a small business at initial stage, while entrepreneurship education seeks

to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success across various settings; to equip them with skills, afford them socio-economic freedom, independence and self-actualization. Entrepreneurship according to the Chambers Dictionary (1997) constitutes the state of being adventurous, being bold and imaginative, full of initiatives in undertaking new projects or ventures and the readiness to dare new grounds for economic or business interest; while entrepreneurship education is about developing attitudes, behaviours and capabilities at the individual level. It is also the application of those skills and attitudes that can take many forms during an individual's careers, locating a range of long-term benefits to society and the economy.

An entrepreneur can be defined as one who undertakes innovations, finance and business acumen in an effort to achieve. According to Anyakoha (2006), the entrepreneur is one who chooses or assumes risks, identifies business opportunities, gathers resources, initiates actions and establishes an organization or enterprise to meet such demand or market opportunity. This definition shows that the entrepreneur is seen as an independent, self-sufficient individual who is willing to face whatever comes up as a result of the decision being taken. So it can be inferred that an entrepreneur is one who has decided to start a personal business which is profitable. The mind is made up to put into maximum use all the abilities and potentials at its disposal. Entrepreneurship education, apart from vocational education, is also effective in preventing youth unemployment. There is a growing recognition among governments and international bilateral and multi-lateral organisations that as jobs become scarce, youth entrepreneurship becomes an important strategy for integrating youth into labour markets thereby addressing unemployment challenges (ILO, 2009). Due to limited resources, life and work experiences, young people face barriers than older age cohorts (Schoof, 2006; Blanchflower & Oswald, 1999). Suleiman (2006) defined entrepreneurship as “the willingness and ability of an individual to seek for investment opportunities to establish and run an enterprise successfully”; while Drucker (1985) viewed an entrepreneur as a person who perceives business opportunities and takes advantage of the scarce resources and use them profitably. Entrepreneurs are job creators and/or become self-employed rather than seekers of jobs in an overstretched public service. The entrepreneur is essentially a person who owns or controls a business through which income is gained.

However, the need to inculcate in students the workplace basic and thinking skills that will enable them to fit properly in the world of work and improve their performance, arouse their interest, encourage both male and female student's participation calls for effective counselling. Therefore, this study was predicated on the need to investigate the influence of Vocational Guidance and Counselling services on entrepreneurship skills development among first year Faculty of Education.

Research questions

1. To what extent does Vocational information motivate first year education students toward development of entrepreneurial skills?

Hypothesis

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of lecturers and students on the extent to which Vocational information dissemination on business acumen motivates first year education students' interest toward development of entrepreneurial skills.

Methodology

The design employed in the study was a descriptive survey. According to Gall, Gall and Borg (2007), a survey research is a method of data collection in which questionnaires or interview is utilized in collecting data from a sample that has been selected to represent a population to which the findings of the data analysis can be generalized. The study was carried out in Calabar.

Calabar is host to two universities and first year education students of the University of Calabar formed the population of the study. The rationale for choosing these students was based on the fact that they possess entrepreneurship aspiration. The targeted population of the study was 252 respondents which comprise of 10 lecturers and 242 students. The entire population of 252 respondents was purposively sampled and used for the study. A questionnaire titled. 'Influence of Vocational Information on the Development of Entrepreneurial Skills Questionnaire (IVIDESQ)' was used for data collection. The instrument consisted of relevant items relevant for answering the research question posed in the study. The response format was a four point rating scale of SD-Strongly Agreed, A-Agreed, D-Disagreed and SD-Strongly Disagreed with corresponding values of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively.

The IVIDESQ was validated by three experts in Guidance and Counselling and Measurement and Evaluation. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient formula was used to determine the reliability of the instrument which yielded a reliability coefficient of .912 reliability index. This indicated that the instrument was reliable. The data generated from the use of structured questionnaire of the study were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses using SPSS Version 20. Therefore any item with mean less or equal to 2.49 was regarded as disagree, whereas any item with mean that is greater or equal to 2.50 was accepted.

Presentation of results

Research question 1: To what extent does vocational information motivate first year education students' toward development of entrepreneurial skills?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of influence of Vocational information on first year education students' toward development of entrepreneurial skills

S/no	Items	\bar{x}	SD	Remarks
1.	Provision of appropriate Information service on buying and selling should motivate students' for entrepreneurship	3.28	1.10	A
2.	Frequent field trips to production plants should expose students to entrepreneurship development	3.05	0.98	A
3.	Guided exposure of students to trade fairs will assist them to acquire entrepreneurship skills	3.10	1.00	A
4.	Relevant business information service to students will equip them to establish an entrepreneurship venture on leaving school	3.10	0.92	A
5.	Attainment of realistic occupational placement	3.11	0.90	A
6.	Information service will motivate students	3.21	0.65	A

Data as presented in table 1, revealed that all the items had mean values ranging from 3.05 - 3.28 and standard deviation ranging from 0.90 - 1.10 which indicate that it is within the acceptance criterion. The close range of the standard deviation also indicates that the respondents were not too far from the mean and were close to one another in their responses. Furthermore, it indicates a strong agreement that vocational information dissemination on business acumen motivate first year education students' interest toward development of entrepreneurial skills.

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of lecturers and students on the extent to which vocational information dissemination on business acumen motivate first year education students' interest toward development of entrepreneurial skills.

Table 2: The t-test analysis of difference between lecturers and Students on the extent vocational information motivates first year education students' interest toward development of entrepreneurial skills

Respondents	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t-cal	t-Crit	Remarks
lecturers	10	3.32	0.76	250	0.92	1.96	Accepted
Students	242	2.65	0.82				

Result in table 2 revealed that $t\text{-cal}$ (0.92) is lesser than $t\text{-crit}$ (1.96) which indicates that the hypothesis stated is accepted. Therefore there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of lecturers and students on the extent Vocational information motivates first year education students' interest toward development of entrepreneurial skills.

Discussion of the findings

The study found out that vocational information motivate first year education students' interest toward development of entrepreneurial skills. This is in line with Damsa (2004), who posited that Vocational guidance affords the students with knowledge to engage in ventures, creations and nurture entrepreneurship successfully and that one major goal of Guidance and Counselling in Nigeria is for Vocational guidance. It is also in line with Abosede, Onyenuga and Owoyele (2012), who asserted that effective and continuous vocational guidance promotes entrepreneurship and eradicates unemployment. According to Jarvis (2011), Vocational guidance assists the young ones in selecting their career in line with their choice and interest thereby making them healthy, self-reliant, resilient individuals and develop entrepreneurial skills. It enables individuals to assess the following areas while choosing a career (Francis, 2011): Aptitude, Skills, Personality, Interests, Needs and Priorities.

Conclusion and counselling implications

Vocational guidance and counselling service, if rendered effectively in schools at all levels, will boost the identification and mentoring of talented youths and nurture them to the optimal level of social, educational and economic development. Early identification of talent of an individual is very essential for the proper planning of programmes for the manpower needs of the country. Guiding young people to pursue the right type of entrepreneurship education through vocational counselling in which there will be no over-production of certain manpower needs and under-production of the other aspects of the manpower needs, is a sure way of eradicating unemployment and building a more prosperous and advanced country. Therefore, the early knowledge of career will aid youths to maximize their productive capacities in accordance with their individual abilities and interest for the benefit of the individual and the society at large.

Recommendations

1. Vocational guidance and counselling service should be rendered to youths before engagement or inclusion in entrepreneurship education to enable them choose appropriate skills in line with their abilities and interest.
2. Information dissemination on various vocations and the world of work should be emphasized at all levels and especially at tertiary education to help awaken and motivate business ideas in youths for entrepreneurial development.
3. A well-articulated entrepreneurship education should offer more than self-employment that will contribute to national development, it should include a counselling component that will help individual's self-understanding for effective decision making.

4. Entrepreneurship skills information and training should be offered constantly to students at all levels of education through intensive and articulated Guidance and Counselling services, thereby making them physically and psychologically ready for entrepreneurship engagement before leaving school.

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