

## ***Career Guidance: A Panacea for Tertiary Institutions Students' Career Opportunities***

**Ramatu Muhammad**

*Department of Educational Foundations  
Faculty of Education and Extension Services  
Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto  
[mramatu57@gmail.com](mailto:mramatu57@gmail.com)*



### **Abstract**

*The paper explains the concept of career and career guidance as well as aims of career guidance which include to assist students to understand their potentials, aptitudes, and interests, in getting information about various post educational training and employment opportunities. Importance of career guidance was also looked at, such as developing educational and career plans for the students, offering a wide range of choices in accordance with their potentials, interest and aptitude. Conclusion and suggestions were made that adequate and functional guidance and counselling centres should be established in all universities, and that students should be exposed, through counselling, to extensive knowledge about themselves and their potentials.*

**Keywords:** Career, guidance, tertiary, institutions, opportunities

### **Introduction**

Tertiary institutions in Nigeria are established for the purpose of training students for the nation's manpower needs at the middle and upper levels, encouraging them to acquire proper values for survival and national development to enable them play appropriate leadership roles (Ogbodo, 2009). The challenges among tertiary institutions' students in Nigeria include disconnection between their field of study and the world of work. Career guidance services should be provided to students to focus on career information through a variety of resources and activities that state the entry and training requirements, employment opportunities, nature and conditions of the work, advancement opportunities, salary and benefits of the job, among others.

### **Career Guidance**

Career guidance is the process of helping an individual to choose a career that best suit their potentials, interest and attitudes, among others. Career guidance, according to

Sambo (2014), is the process by which all the various factors affecting individual's occupational choices are sorted out and brought into focus, which help the individual to make their choice in the full knowledge of the facts about their potentials.

Career guidance is the systematic assistance given to students in developing goals and choices related to their education and career. It is concerned with obtaining information about opportunities, helping to determine if the opportunities fit them, and helping them to take proper steps to achieve their goals. Primarily, career guidance creates understanding of the many problems that face tertiary institution students in Nigeria in the long term planning. Career planning consists of thinking through short term as well as long term goals. The attainment of short term goals may contribute to the attainment of long term goals (Ode, 2017). Thus, the degree programmes that the students choose to study in the tertiary institutions of learning ought to be made when adequate information has been provided to the students. This will ensure that students make informed decisions and reduce the possibility of error in choosing among multitude of tasks and alternatives in clarifying objectives.

According to Ikeotuonye (2000), career guidance enables students to have adequate and detailed information about careers which will help them to know about the stability or seasonality of occupations. One cannot choose what one does not know, and many occupations are unknown to some tertiary institutions' students. One may stumble into an appropriate occupation by sheer luck, but the wise choice of a career requires accurate information about what occupations are available, what they require, and what they offer. Occupational information alone is not enough, but knowledge and acceptance of one's own aptitudes, abilities, needs, limitations, interests, values, feelings, fears, likes and dislikes are essential also. It is a clear thinking about the relative significance of all the facts; through occupational information, the individual will examine himself on his total personality in line with job requirement, job contents and job description to enable him choose the job which is best suitable for him (Mihaela & Cristina, 2015).

### **Problems associated with Career Guidance in Nigeria**

Some of the major problems of career guidance in Nigerian tertiary institutions, according to Senzaki (2001:24) include:

- i. lack of functional counselling centres required to promote education and career development.
- ii. lack of adequate information of the programmes and prospects for tertiary institutions' students in maximizing their occupational goals.
- iii. lack of objective and subjective test of students which may help them to know themselves better.

- iv. inadequate trained counsellors in tertiary institutions of learning.
- v. wrong perception of counsellors' role in tertiary institutions of learning.

### **Aims of Career Guidance**

The major objectives of career guidance according to Ogbodo (2009:18) include:

- i. To assist clients (students) to acquire knowledge of the characteristics, functions, duty, requirements of occupations in which they are interested.
- ii. To enable clients to get relevant information about abilities and skills in terms of related qualifications and competencies required to take up the identified occupation.
- iii. To assist clients in developing abilities to analyse occupational information and make suitable choice by using appropriate career information effectively.
- iv. To assist clients in getting information about various post educational and training facilities and apprenticeship schemes.
- v. To enable clients to understand their potentials and interest in relation to identified occupation or a group of occupations which they may take up.

### **Importance of Career Guidance to tertiary institutions students' career opportunities**

Developing educational and career plans for the future is one of the prime importance of the guidance programme which offers a wide range of choices for students in accordance with the individual's abilities, interest and aptitudes which helps in developing career skills among students so that they can contribute fully to the national economic growth in their various occupational fields. Developing sufficient and qualified manpower for the various sectors of economic, social and political development, counsellors aim at assisting the students to make appropriate social, personal, educational and vocational decisions and adjustment (Woods & Frugoli, 2002).

There is a growing importance of Career Guidance, particularly in developing countries due to its role in linking education and employment (Okon, 2002). Career guidance is an education programme that aims to prepare learners for entry into employment in their chosen careers and meet the labour market needs of a nation. It has been identified as a major provider of skills development in many countries and has helped to address the challenges of youth employment by enhancing learners' employability. Cristie (2016) explained Career Guidance services and programmes as broad range of activities, such as one-to-one advice and guidance within a portfolio of activities generally managed by a central career services. Such services can be found in schools, tertiary institutions and colleges, training institutions, public employment services, the workplace, the voluntary or community sector, and in the private sector.

Career Guidance activities include career information provision, assessment and self-assessment tools, counselling interviews, and career education programmes, "taster" programmes that allow job-seekers to sample options, job search, and transition services. Due to the importance of Career Guidance for tertiary institutions' students, there have been several studies that examined the relationships between career education and tertiary institutions students' career aspirations and choices in multiple contexts.

Career guidance helps tertiary institutions' students to reflect on their ambitions, interests, qualifications and abilities. It helps them to understand the labour market and educational systems, and to relate this to what they know about themselves. Comprehensive career guidance tries to teach students to plan and make decisions about work and learning. Career guidance makes information about the labour market and about educational opportunities more accessible by organizing it, systematizing it, and making it available when and where people need it.

Ode (2017) noted that the provision of career guidance in Nigerian tertiary institutions has been necessitated by great changes in the society and the world at large, and has become more complex than ever before. Automation and recession, for example, have forced many people into early retirement and retrenchment, resulting to unemployment. The rate of technological change and the isolation of young people from possibilities for employment have created problems in occupational choices. Many tertiary institutions' graduates are not able to obtain a formal exposure to a variety of occupations, nor can they easily obtain relevant data about them. Students have a limited knowledge of occupations and of the narrow range of alternatives available to them. This ignorance leads to unrealistic career aspirations. There is, therefore, a need to assist students to have more realistic career expectations (Zunker, 2006). Students do not know the routine features that characterize work industry, for instance, the mental health hazards of alienating work include an increase in drug use, alcoholism, absenteeism, on-the-job accidents, depression, withdrawal, and forms of mental disturbance.

The students should be assisted to be aware of such hazards as well as of actual working conditions. The society places values on certain jobs. Some jobs are believed to be exclusively for males, while others are regarded for females; for example, midwifery is traditionally thought to be for female only while architecture is thought to be a man's job. Hence, there is need to address gender issues in order to eliminate stereotype from society. The students should be aware of the options for wage-earning and gainful employment. For example, they should prepare a business plan and make concerted efforts to find self-employment. Moreover, there is a craving in the society

for the accumulation of knowledge. Although specialization can be a blessing to society, the same society may feel that individuals are over-trained, and under-used. Students need to be aware of such problems and how to adjust to them. Undoubtedly, career guidance is seen by many authors as a panacea for students' career opportunities. According to Ode (2017:24), career guidance tends to:

- i. Aid in placing talent where it is needed; the student is assisted to make the best possible vocational choice.
- ii. Add a feeling of security to the nation, the schools and the students, so that all face the future with confidence. The student is helped to develop an ability to control their future.
- iii. Provide information about occupational opportunities; students become aware of the world of work and the range of available opportunities that exist.
- iv. Encouraging students in decision making; decisions on what type of life a student would like to lead depend on their interests, values, abilities, skills and motivation in relation to the world of work.
- v. Help students to deal with a variety of problems; since the society in which students live is constantly changing, they have to adjust to change, understand the problem of unemployment and its causes.

### **Related theories of Career Guidance**

There are different theories of counselling and occupational choice such as trait and factor theory and self-theory. In order to provide a client with a framework for exploration of career issues and options before reaching a well-reasoned decision and constructing a realistic action plan, it is necessary to review some of these theories.

#### **A. Trait and Factor Theory (Frank Parson, 1990)**

This approach is regarded as a foundational theory as it was the first and oldest theory that paved ways for the emergence of other theoretical postulations in the field of career counselling which attempts to explain how one selects an occupation. Frank Parson often regarded as the father of guidance, was the proponent of this theory. Parson in 1990 made his theory of career counselling public through his book entitled *Choosing a Vocation*.

Traits develop in an individual as a result of the interaction of heredity and environmental influences. Williamson considered it from the counselling technique while Frank Parson (1990) approached it from the vocational development angle such as: Analysis of person, Analysis of the job, Matching Analysis of person and job analysis.

- i. Analysis of person: people have different traits; therefore, they are different from one another. An individual has to understand himself: his abilities, attitudes, aptitudes, interest, intelligence, emotional intelligence, values and limitations.

ii. Analysis of the job: that is the individual has to understand the conditions of service of the job, the demands, needs, requirements, qualities and job hazards. Each occupation has a unique set of characteristics of its members.

iii. Matching Analysis of person and job analysis: it should be possible by a study of both to achieve a match between persons and jobs, the individual now compares his personal characteristics with the job before making a decision on the job that best suits him (Mutie & Ndambuki, 2004). Parson believes that the extent to which an individual enjoys job satisfaction is based on how a job matches the individual's characteristics. The more consistent a job matches the individual's potential, the more success he will record in the job and the less frustration he will encounter.

### **B. Self-Theory (Super, 1951)**

George (1997) defined relationship between self-concept and occupational choice as the point in life which a young person is called upon to state rather explicitly the concept of himself; to know the kind of person he is, the society provides an individual with opportunities to play several roles in expressing a vocational preference, a person puts into occupational terminology his idea of the kind of person he is, getting established in an appropriate occupation. This theory demands an individual to make a rational choice of occupation which fits with his image and abilities in the world of work.

### **Review of empirical studies**

There are many related studies on career guidance. Neilson, and Palmer's (2017) study on "understanding the career aspirations and skill development action plans of Information Technology students" found variability in students' short-term aspirations and a lack of understanding regarding effective actions to achieve their career goals. Pitan and Atiku (2017) examined "students' employability through career guidance activities offered at selected tertiary institutions" and found that "self-awareness and opportunity awareness have the greatest influence on students' employability, followed by decision-making skills, and then transition learning skills". Pitan and Atiku (2017) investigated employability development opportunities as measures of students' enhanced employability in Nigeria and found a significant positive relationship.

Jimoh (2014) investigates impact of educational aspirations on vocational choices of the female secondary school students in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria. The study used descriptive survey design targeting some of the female students from the three female secondary schools in Ondo West Local Government. Purposive sampling technique was used to select three (3) schools from which 200 students were selected from the schools using simple random sampling. The study reported that environment has a great effect on the educational aspiration and choice

of career of female secondary school students. More so, socio economic status of parents also has an impact on the educational aspiration and choice of career of the female secondary school students.

Osakinie (2010) studied the influence of parental socio economic status and career choice of secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The samples consist of four hundred randomly selected parents and four hundred secondary school students from four local government areas in Ekiti State. Two hypotheses were generated and tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test statistical analysis. The results showed that there was significant difference between parental socio economic status as well as gender influence of secondary school students on choice of career. The paper concluded that career counselling is necessary in order to have positive career choice.

Edoh and Alutu (2011) investigated parent's socio-economic status and its effect on students' educational values and vocational choice. Survey research design was used. The population of the study consists of 100 SS III students. Simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used. The study revealed that there is significant difference in educational values and career aspirations of the students from high and middle socio-economic homes in favour of the higher socio-economic status.

Alike (2010) conducted a study to investigate if parents and peer groups of students have any influence in the choice of a career among secondary school students. The relationship between the two primary factors (parental and peer group influence) and career choice was determined using Person Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. One research question and one hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. Three research instruments were used. They are the students Occupational Clusters Preference Scale (OCPS), Peer Pressure Assessment Scale (PPAS) and the Parental Influence Assessment Inventory (PIA). The population of the study comprises students in senior secondary school II. Results showed that there was no significant relationship between parental and peer group influence and career choice in humanities among secondary school students. It is recommended that counsellors should work directly with parents and peers, especially as regards career development with a view to enhancing the positive aspects; this may eventually improve the career development prospects of future workers.

Many students these days think of only a career or occupation that will bring quick and much money; that is why there are a lot of accountants, salary clerks, and other jobs that deal with money, neglecting other fields even if it is their area of specialization. They are not after job satisfaction and effectiveness but to gain only self-satisfaction. Signers and Saldanas (2001) in a study found that the social status of

mother's occupation as opposed to the social status of father's occupations had a stronger correlation with the social status of student's career choice.

Cristie (2016) conducted a study, the purpose of which was to examine family influences on career development and aspirations of young adults. The study utilized ideas from self-determination, attachment and career development theories to develop a framework for understanding how families influence young adults' career development and aspirations. Rather than directly influencing career decisions, the family was proposed to influence processes within individuals that directly influence successful career development. The sample of the study consisted of 99 female and 34 male undergraduate students between age 18 and 20. The findings suggest that future research should assess multiple aspects of the family and multiple facets regarding career development to more fully understand this process. In addition, findings support the idea that career counsellors should assess family functioning when helping young people in their career development journey.

### **Conclusion**

Career guidance is an indispensable facet of university programme in Nigeria, as it is elsewhere in the world. Thus, its absence has led to the growing difficulty on the part of the graduates of the tertiary institutions in securing employment. It is therefore necessary and important to embark on full implementation of career guidance in Nigerian tertiary institutions to help coordinate and guide the students to make appropriate career choice.

### **Suggestions**

In recognition of the needs of career guidance in university education programme, the following suggestions are made:

- i. Adequate and functional guidance and counselling centres should be established in all tertiary institutions.
- ii. Tertiary institutions' students should be exposed to extensive knowledge about themselves, and match this knowledge with their potentials, school progress, work experience, personality, health, values, interests, aptitudes and achievement.
- iii. Career guidance should be introduced in all university discipline as a course of study.
- iv. The guidance counsellors should assist the students to collect, analyze and use a variety of objective and social data about the students, so that they can gain a better understanding of the students.
- v. Students who seek vocational guidance should be provided with adequate opportunity for a counselling interview with a career guidance officer, who will guide them in the choice of specific vocational courses.

## Reference

- Alike, Y. J. (2010). Influence of Parents and peer groups in the choice of a career among secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis. Unpublished M.Ed Dissertation, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.
- Cristie, G. T. (2016). *Educational Research and Career Guidance*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Edoh, A. M. & Alutu, M. E. (2011). Parent's socio-economic status and its effect in student's educational values and vocational choice. *Sokoto International Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 3.
- George, W. E. (1997). *How to counsel*. New York: McGraw Hill Books Co.
- Ikeotuonye, A. I. (2000). *The Place of Testing in Counselling: A Book of Reading in Counselling*. Enugu: Fourth Dimensions
- Jimoh, O. R. (2014). Impact of educational aspirations on vocational choices of the female secondary school students in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria. Unpublished M. Ed Dissertation, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.
- Mihaela, A. N. & Cristiana, G. I. (2015). A Research: The Educational Counselling and Career Guidance in Romania. *European Scientific Journal*, 2, 59-78.
- Mutie, E. K. & Ndambuki, P. (2004). *Guidance and Counselling for Schools and Colleges*. Nairobi, Kenya: Oxford University Press.
- Neilson, S. E. & Palmer, U. A. (2017). *Understanding the career aspirations and skill development action plans of Information Technology students for schools*. Abuja: Gracehands publishers.
- Ode, E. J. (2017). The Importance of Vocational Guidance in Vocational Education Programmes in Nigeria. *International Journal of Innovative Education Research*, 5(1), 43-48.
- Ogbodo, R. O. (2009). *Basic Career Information for Schools*. Abuja: Gracehands Publishers.
- Okon, S. E. (2002). *History of Vocational Guidance*. New York: Harper and Brothers.
- Osakinie, E. M. (2010). Influence of parental socio economic status and career choice of secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria. *The Counsellor*, 34.
- Pitan, O. A. & Atiku, L. B. (2017). *Career Development and System Theory: Connecting Theory and Practice* (3rd ed.). Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Sambo, S. (2014). *Understanding Guidance and Counselling*. Ibadan: Heinemann.
- Senzaki, T. (2001). The Contribution of D. E. Super to Career Guidance and Counselling Research in Japan. *Bunkyo University Educational Research Bulletin*, 10.

*Career Guidance: A Panacea for Tertiary Institutions Students' Career Opportunities*  
**Ramatu Muhammad**

- Woods, J. & Frugoli, P. (2002). Information, tools, technology: Informing labour exchange participants. Paper Prepared for the Conference on Job Training and Labour Exchange in the U.S., jointly organized by the W. E. Upjohn Institute and the U.S. Department of Labour, Augusta, Michigan, September.
- Zunker, G. V. (2006). *Career Counselling: A Holistic Approach*. Belmont: Thomson Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.