

Perception on the Influence of Guidance and Counselling Practices on Career Choice among Secondary School Students in Jalingo Metropolis, Taraba State

Bala Albert Suleh, Ph.D
*Department of General Studies
Taraba State Polytechnic, Suntai
balaalbertsule@gmail.com*

Chigbu Eberechukwu Francisca, Ph.D
*Department of Guidance and Counselling
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
ef.chigbu@unizik.edu.ng*



Abstract

The study adopted descriptive survey research design, to investigate the influence of guidance and counselling practices on career choice among secondary school students of Jalingo metropolis. The population of the study was 2,940 Senior secondary school II students. Simple random sampling technique was used to draw a sample size of 588 respondents. The instrument for the study was a structured questionnaire titled “Guidance and counselling practices and career choice questionnaire (GCPCCQ)” with a four point rating scale designed to elicit information from the respondents. The instrument was face validated by experts in the fields of Guidance and counselling and Educational Measurement and Evaluation, while a reliability coefficient value of 0.74 was obtained using the Pearson’s product moment correlation. Mean scores and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions. The study concluded that guidance and counselling practices such as educational, vocational and persona-social counselling programmes in schools will assist students to harmonize their abilities, interests and values thereby help them to develop to their full potential. The study recommended that schools should be supplied with sufficient manpower in terms of trained counsellors who will be able to guide, direct and assist the students towards achieving their ultimate goal in life.

Keywords: influence, guidance, counselling, practice, career, choice

Introduction

Education is a vital tool for societal transformation, having the school as an institution for the realization of its goals and objectives. Counselling is a learning process in which a counsellor helps an individual or individuals learn, understand themselves and their environment and be in a position to choose the right type of behaviours that will help them develop, grow, progress, ascend, mature and step up, educationally, vocationally and socio-personally (Ebizie, 2016). In other words, counselling is a transformative process of helping people to learn all that are to be learnt both in and outside the school. Counselling is a helping relationship where a person is assisted in a face-to face interaction. Counselling programmes are designed to assist clients who have challenges. The goals of counselling are broadly based on behavioural change, problem resolution and symptom removal. Amekudi (2004) defined counselling as a process of helping an individual to understand their world in order to utilize their potential.

According to Oye, Mohammed and Bernice (2012), counselling programmes provide opportunities for students to improve themselves, relate well and develop ethical standards for educational pursuit. It also helps the school child to obtain holistic educational development. The counsellor is strategically placed in schools in order to assist the students. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) specifically mentioned the need for counselling programmes in school. According to Adegoke (2004), the counsellor can assist in-school adolescents to handle behavioural, educational and psychological problems. Alabi (2006) noted that this process creates a change in personality organization and structure which are relatively permanent.

The place of counselling programmes in schools cannot be overemphasized especially with the daily expansion in the enrolment of students in schools, growing needs of youths in Nigeria, the continual unrest in schools and the repeated changes in the educational system (Idowu, 2004). Counselling services have become essential programmes in schools and these cannot be done in isolation. There is the need for the counsellor to develop good relationship with other school personnel. Onanuga (1993) emphasized on the need to incorporate guidance and counselling programmes into Nigerian educational system. In the same vein, Nwachukwu (2007) noted that if the 6-3-3-4 educational system must succeed, then the place of guidance and counselling services should not be overlooked.

Career is a series of job that a person has in a particular area of work, usually involving more responsibilities as time passes (Okonkwo, 2011). Career as used in the field of counselling has a broad and technical meaning. Technically, it refers to sequence of role or a position including works, leisure and educational pursuit that may encompass

a number of occupations, vocations or jobs one engages in during his working life (Seligman, 2010). Career can also be said to be total life long experience of work that has come to serve as means of earning a livelihood (Kolo, 2011). The concept of career choice previously was not as difficult as it is today. There were fewer job opportunities and more importantly, parents, teachers and religious bodies were aware of existing opportunities as well as requirements for entry into them. Career choice has become complex task among students in the face of ever changing technology in the information sector. The term career is broadly defined as all life time roles people play including students, parents, employees, retirees and employers. Career choice without doubt is the base which determines the future career of a student. The redirection towards the real professionalism and future of a student in schools through career choice can never be over emphasized. Students with good career choice are expected to enjoy the following benefits: completion of course of study at stipulated time; reduction of drop out; removal of one sided choice of course of study in secondary school of learning; reduction of wastages in terms of human and material resources in education sector; and proper placement.

Johnson (2018) defined career as one's lifework; in other words, career is one's profession which includes a number of occupation, vocations or jobs one person engages in during his or her working life. Career is the course of events that constitute a life, the sequence of occupations and other life roles which combine to express one's commitment to work in his or her total pattern of self-development. Parents' educational and occupational background may affect student's choice of career because some students may contemplate on whether to continue with their parents' occupation or not. What the students see in the television also may affect their career choice. Some careers demand that one should have the personality to match the qualities of the occupation. For these reasons the necessity of a guidance counsellor in schools cannot be over emphasized.

The primary goal of career guidance and counselling is to make it possible for an individual to see and explore his or her unlimited endowed options. It is an undeniable fact that major service areas of guidance and counselling are, educational guidance and counselling which assists students in their choices of career; vocational guidance and counselling which assists the individual to choose and prepare for an occupation that is compatible with his interests and aptitudes, and personal social guidance and counselling which assists the individual to behave appropriately in relation to other members of the society (Odeck, 2009; Ipaye, 2004).

Career counsellors on the other hand do offer a wide range of career related programmes to students which are aimed at assisting students plan their career, make

informed decisions and choose a career which will lead him or her to the right vocation so as to make students enjoy their work (Osborn & Zunker, 2012; Collins, 2002). In view of this, students receive comprehensive career counselling programmes (interventions) that require career and life plans through all levels of schools and beyond, as well as school-to-work programmes which focus on preparing students for work through experienced internship activities in communities and organizations (Osborn & Zunker, 2012). Thus, it is important to provide career intervention activities in schools with the aim to support students with information and guidance with regards to personal, academic and career options (Rosenbaum & Person, 2003), as well as to guide and prepare students for multiple roles within broad industry sectors from the transition from secondary school. If such interventions are provided, it will enable them fit into the rapidly advancing technology. Thus there is the need for increased training and education to enable students to choose thoughtfully and break into most fields that are important and sophisticated than ever.

Guidance counsellors, therefore, have an important role in advocating for broad-based career plans that focus on the students' interests and abilities which will give students increased career options in the future. Many students are provided with inadequate realistic information about occupations and careers on which to base their interests. Based on this, the researchers are interested in finding out the influence of counselling practices on students' career choice in secondary schools in Jalingo metropolis.

Statement of the problem

Career choice decision making process is one of the key elements in an individual's life. There exists numerous problems encountered by students in their process of career choice. Wrong career selection opens the door for lifelong consequences. Such individuals, by underperforming, become a source of inefficiency not only for themselves, their organization but also for the economy as a whole. Choice of subjects and course as a result of lack of sufficient information is a major problem. There is a conflict between the student's freedom of occupation and not only that of the nation's manpower needs, but also the conflict between the students' choices, the parents' choice and friend's advice. The problem encountered by students in their process of career choice is that some secondary school students are not properly guided due to lack of guidance and counselling services. Counselling services are not encouraged and even where they exist they lack professional counsellors and inadequate information to guide students on different career prospects. The problem of the study is that some secondary school students are not able to make appropriate career choices due to a number of factors that affect their career development process. Such factors include psychological, sociological, physical, economic, educational and chance factors. The factors that may influence choice of career include socio economic

factors, personal or family factors. Therefore, the problem of this study is to examine the influence of counselling practices on students' career choice in secondary schools in Jalingo Metropolis.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of Guidance and Counselling practices on students' career choice among secondary school students in Jalingo metropolis. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. examine the extent to which educational counselling practices influence students' career choice in secondary schools.
2. examine the extent to which vocational counselling practices influence students' career choice in secondary schools.
3. examine the extent to which personal social counselling practices influence student's career choice in secondary schools.

Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does educational counselling practice influence students' career choice in secondary schools?
2. To what extent does vocational counselling practice influence students' career choice in secondary schools?
3. To what extent does personal social counselling practice influence students' career choice in secondary schools?

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was used to carry out this study. The research questions were answered by descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. The population of the study was two thousand nine hundred and forty (2940) Senior secondary school II (SSS2) students in Jalingo metropolis. The sample for the study consists of 20 percent of the total population making a total of 588 students drawn from the senior secondary schools under study. The instrument used for this study was a 4- point modified Likert Scale which is an interval scale-ranging from strongly Agree to strongly Disagree, with a numerical value ranging from 4 points to 1 point. The instrument that was used for this study was a questionnaire titled: Influence of Counselling Services on Students Career Choice in Secondary School: Implication for Career Counselling Questionnaire (CSSCCSCCQ). The instrument had 14 (fourteen) items. A weighted average of 2.5 was accepted for research questions. The instrument was validated by Experts in Guidance and Counselling and two other experts in Measurement and Evaluation in Faculty of Education, Taraba State University, who ascertained the face and content validity. The reliability of the instrument was

determined through test-re-test method, using Pearson’s Product Moment Coefficient statistical tool. A reliability coefficient of 0.72 was obtained and considered suitable for the study.

Presentation of results

Research Question 1: To what extent does educational counselling practice influence students’ career choice in secondary schools?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation on the extent to which educational counselling practices influence career choice

S/N	Items	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
1	Educational counselling helps students to maintain good study habit.	2.59	1.99	Accepted
2	It prepares students for academic challenges by relating educational agendas to their success in the future.	2.78	1.40	Accepted
3	It provides support to teachers by serving an important part of the complete team that addresses the educational goals and needs of their students	2.99	1.55	Accepted
4	Educational counsellors gather and share resources with teachers to help the staff develop their skills in classroom management and teaching effectiveness	2.54	1.39	Accepted
5	It makes teaching and learning easy.	3.51	1.50	Accepted
	Grand Scores	2.88	1.57	Accepted

From the table 1, the mean score of 2.59 and standard deviation score of 1.99 implies that educational counselling helps students to maintain good study habit; the mean score of 2.78 and standard deviation score of 1.40 entails that it prepares students for academic challenges by relating educational agendas to their success in future; the mean score of 2.99 and standard deviation score of 1.55 means that it provides support to teachers by serving an important part of the complete team that addresses the educational goals and needs of their students; the mean score of 2.54 and standard deviation score of 1.39 implies that educational counsellors gather and share resources with teachers to help the staff develop their skills in classroom management and teaching effectiveness; the mean score of 3.51 and standard deviation score of 1.50

implies it makes teaching and learning easy; while the grand mean score of 2.88 and standard deviation score of 1.57 provides that educational counselling practices influence career choice and academic achievement of secondary school students in Jalingo metropolis.

Research Question 2: To what extent does vocational counselling practice influence students' career choice in secondary schools?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation on the extent to which vocational counselling practices influence career choice of secondary schools students in Jalingo Metropolis

S/NO	Items	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
6	Vocational counselling makes students motivated learners and facilitates their exploration of careers.	3.55	1.41	Accepted
7	It prepares students for career challenges by relating vocational agendas to their success in future.	3.50	1.72	Accepted
8	It identifies strengths and weaknesses of students.	2.50	1.50	Accepted
9	It explores options for the students.	2.50	1.41	Accepted
10	It identifies the individual set goals.	3.20	1.91	Accepted
	Grand Scores	3.05	1.59	Accepted

From table 2, the mean score of 3.55 and standard deviation score of 1.41 implies that vocational counselling makes students motivated learners and facilitates their exploration of careers; the mean score of 3.50 and standard deviation score of 1.72 entails that it prepares students for career challenges by relating to their career success in the future; the mean score of 2.50 and standard deviation score of 1.50, provides that it identifies strength and weaknesses of the students; the mean score of 2.50 and standard deviation score of 1.41 implies that it explores options for the students; the mean score of 3.20 and standard deviation score of 1.91 implies that identifies the individual set goals, while the grand mean score of 3.05 and standard deviation score of 1.59 provides that vocational counselling practices influence career choice of secondary school students in Jalingo metropolis.

Research Question 3: To what extent does personal social counselling practice influence career choice of secondary school students in Jalingo metropolis?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation on the extent to which personal social counselling practices influence career choice of secondary school students in Jalingo Metropolis

S/N	Items	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
11	Personal social counselling brings about better expression and management of emotions including anger.	3.61	1.53	Accepted
12	Increased confidence and decision-making skills.	2.65	1.30	Accepted
13	It gives the ability to change self-defeating behaviours/habit.	2.54	1.46	Accepted
14	It relieves individuals from depression, anxiety or other mental health conditions.	3.05	0.94	Accepted
Grand Scores		2.89	1.45	Accepted

From the table 3, the mean score of 3.61 and standard deviation score of 1.53 implies that personal social counselling brings about better expression and management of emotions, including anger; the mean score of 2.65 and standard deviation score of 1.30 entails that personal social counselling brings about increased confidence and decision-making skills; the mean score of 2.54 and standard deviation score of 1.46 provides that it gives the ability to change self-defeating behaviours/habit; the mean score of 3.05 and standard deviation score of 0.94 implies it relieves individuals from depression, anxiety or other mental health conditions; while the grand mean score of 2.89 and standard deviation score of 1.45 provides that personal social counselling practices influence career choice of secondary school students in Jalingo metropolis.

Discussion of findings

It was found out that the students have positive perception on the extent to which educational counselling practices influence career choice of secondary school students in Jalingo metropolis. Egbochukwu (1997) supported this finding and asserted that when considering the educational stage at which choice is to be made, secondary school is the best option. The tertiary level of education is the level of education at which students limit themselves to a specific area of proficiency based on the foundation level while in the secondary school level. Furthermore, Navin (2009) opined that educational counselling helps students to know the value of education, educate students and parents about the various courses in education. Educational counsellors suggest the stream of course or subject, and assist students concerned about academic, emotional or social problems. Help students process their problems

and plan goals and action, and finally mediate in conflict between students and teachers.

The study also revealed that vocational counselling practices influence career choice of secondary school students in Jalingo metropolis. In line with this finding, Seligman (2010) opined in his study that vocational counselling is a set of practices designed to develop the skills and ability to practice a vocation in a productive way, Those born with physical or cognitive impairment are taught how to perform in the workplace taking into consideration their abilities and challenges. It is a process during which a vocational counsellor helps their clients to decide, in an aware and independent way, which occupation they want (Issa & Nwalo, 2008).

Finally, it was found in this study that students have positive perception on the influence of personal social counselling practices on career choice of secondary school students in Jalingo metropolis. In personal social counselling, individual counselling (sometimes called psychotherapy, talk therapy, or treatment) is a process through which clients work one-on-one with a trained mental health clinician in a safe, caring, and confidential environment (Olamide & Olawaiye, 2013), and that individual counselling is counselling focused on the individual's immediate or near future concerns.

Conclusion

The study concluded that the major aim of guidance and counselling service is to encourage students' academic, social, emotional and personal development. To reach this aim, it helps students get to know themselves better and find effective solutions to their daily problems. The guidance and counselling practice in the school refers to the range of interventions provided to students to enable them to make choices in the key areas of their personal/social lives, education and career. In other words, guidance and counselling practices such as educational, vocational and personal social counselling in schools assist students to harmonize their abilities, interests and values and thereby helping them to develop their full potentials. Counselling is a collaborative process that involves the development of a confidential professional relationship that focuses on personal problems.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. Schools should be supplied with sufficient manpower in terms of trained educational counsellors who will be able to guide, direct and assist the students towards achieving their ultimate goal in life.

2. Schools should also provide vocational counselling sessions and career programme for the students, parents and guardians and giving the information regarding the capabilities, intellectual abilities and limitation of their children as they need to choose a particular vocation in life.

3. Career clubs should also be introduced in schools which would make available personal social counselling practices, career literature and talks from employers of labour.

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