

Students Perception Of The Role Of School Counselors In The Choice Of Career In Secondary Schools In Enugu State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The study centered on the student's perception of the role of school counselors in the choice of career in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The population for this study comprised of 17,221. This comprises all the SS 2 students in the 314 public secondary schools in Enugu State. Available data shows that there are 7,219 male and 10,002 female senior secondary school students two in Enugu State. This gave a total population of 17,221 senior secondary school students two from the six Education zones in the state. The sample of this study consisted of three hundred and fifty (350) male and four hundred and fifty (450) female students was drawn using stratified random sampling techniques to ensure a proportionate representation of the stratum of interest, that is, the gender of the students. While the instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Role of School Counselor in the Choice of Career Questionnaire (RSCCCQ). The questionnaire was developed by the researcher and it has two sections, A and B. Section A dealt with the bio-data of the respondents while section B dealt with information on role of school counselor in the choice of career. The instrument was faced validated while the reliability co-efficient of the instrument was calculated using Cronbach Alpha method. Alpha value was found to be 0.93, indicating high reliability of the entire instrument. Mean score and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while t-test statistic was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The Findings of this study indicates that there is availability of guidance and counselling services that guide student choice of career in secondary schools in Enugu State. Also the findings of the study revealed that students have access to guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Enugu State. Recommendations were therefore made among others that Guidance and counselling services should not only be available in schools but that counsellors must routinize their activities to benefit students the more. Conferences on career opportunities as well as group counselling should be encouraged.

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Melvin (2015), secondary school education is the engine room of knowledge acquisition, a stage at which students come in contact with various subjects, which determine the field of study they will like to pursue in higher schools secondary school education is kind of level after the primary education and before higher education. Its position in educational system also speaks of its importance. Schwarzeller (2017) see school as that which provides an outside view of what needs to happen in order for change to occur and also an equal opportunity for developing capabilities and talents.

Education reforms Nigeria always have the secondary schools as main focus. In fact, it is viewed as powerful stage for knowledge, skill and experience acquisition as well as a wide range of career prospects for young boys and girls (Ezekwesili, 2016).

It is systems that is targeted towards strengthening secondary school education and provide students with more practical knowledge that can make them self-reliant after graduation. Kutara (2017) opines that, individual differences exist among people; this has an effect on who the individuals are and what they are capable of doing. What an individual does is sometimes variance with his ability, aptitude capability and interest. Individual differences in the rate of growth,

intellect, school achievement sex usually set the pace where students look at themselves in career orientation. But such factors as home, the school, the mosque, church and the community for very vital factors in the students' environment, thus, influencing their career choice or aspirations. Other factors like parental expectation, big salary, societal prestige, personal security, good rapport with friends, changes for advancement as well as the nature of the work itself have directly or indirectly lured most student who are about to leave school into making unrealistic career choice.

Career as used in the field of counseling 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, 2019). According to the international Encyclopedia Britannica (2018) career is job for which it is possible to advance during their working life, so that they may get greater responsibility and earn more money.

Career can also be said to be the total life long experience of work that has come to serve as his means of earning a livelihood (Kolo, 2019). The 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 the existing opportunities as well as requirements for entry into them. Today, the situation the same for the fact that secondary school students hardly have full knowledge of the requirement for each job and can no longer keep track with the numerous career opportunities, it is against this background that the guidance and counseling was introduced in order to assist the secondary students in choosing a career.

Guidance and counseling is helping profession which is concerned with molding, reconstructing and rehabilitating a trouble person. It is a self-revealing relationship and both preventive and curative of maladaptive behavior. It is globally accepted that, guidance and counseling activities are for human beings, those with or without problems, normal and abnormal.

The establishment of modern guidance and counseling in secondary schools in Nigeria however, rest on the realization of the need for more sophisticated and integrated package to help individual satisfy their problems and concerns of presents day living.

Okon (2018) defined guidance as total programme of a number highly specialized activities implemented by specialist to help individual make wise and intelligent choice and decisions, counseling on the other hand, has been defined by Makinde (2017) as a service designed to help an individual analyze himself by capabilities, achievements, interest mode of adjustment towards what new decision he has made or has make.

Therefore, since guidance and counseling is a profession, for effective counseling to take place it must involves the application of basic principles for effective helping. These however, include the principle of understanding, sequential process; appreciate self-disclosure and observance of ethics. Their applications not only make counseling effective but also add to the specialist of the counseling relationship.

For guidance to be meaningful, it, must be seen as a series of programmed activities which help the normal school child to know himself/herself as an individual, become more aware of his/her person, experience his/her world and those people he/she relate with it is a dynamic process which undergoes continuous change over time as it is not a single event but a series of events, steps or action which are geared towards the general development of the individual. Hence, guidance and counseling play a vital role in the career choice of the students.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Most schools in Nigeria run programmes that are deficient in diversification to cater for all career choice of students. In these schools, most of the students are lefty unguided either because their schools have no guidance and counseling services or the nature is not up to standard, students are prone to making unwise career choice or no choice at all because there is no counselor to guide them, until after schooling.

Choice of subjects and course as a result of lack of sufficient information. A part from this problem, there is a conflict between the student's freedoms of occupation and not only that of the nation's manpower needs, but also the conflicts between the students' choices, the parents' choice and friend's advice.

The fact that secondary school students cannot make realistic career plans is a serious problem and this research work will equally look at the problem associated with guidance and counseling, career choice and aspirations of these levels of students considering the fact that guidance and counseling has implication on their choice and aspiration, which career choice has serious consequences on their future and by extension the society at large.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study:

- ✓ what are the guidance and counselling services available in secondary schools in Enugu State?
- ✓ how often do secondary schools students access guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Enugu State?

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The following null hypotheses which was tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study

- ✓ There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the availability of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Enugu State.
- ✓ There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the students access guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Enugu State.

II. METHODOLOGY

The design of this study was descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey design, according to Ali (2006) is a study in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. Hence, the researcher deems it necessary to use this design due to the fact that a representative sample of the entire population was used for the study. The study was carried out in Enugu State, Nigeria. It covered all the 17 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the State. The population for this study comprised of 17,221. This comprises all the SS 2 students in the 314 public secondary schools in Enugu State. Available data shows that there are 7,219 male and 10,002 female senior secondary school students two in Enugu state. This gave a total population of 17,221 senior secondary school students two from the six Education zones in the state. The sample of this study consisted of three hundred and fifty (350) male and four hundred and fifty (450) female students was drawn using stratified random sampling techniques to ensure a proportionate representation of the stratum of interest, that is, the gender of the students. While the instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Role of School Counselor in the Choice of Career Questionnaire (RSCCCQ). The questionnaire was developed by the researcher and it had two sections, A and B. Section A dealt with the bio-data of the respondents while section B dealt with information on role of school counselor in the choice of career. The instrument was faced validated while the reliability co-efficient of the instrument was calculated using Cronbach Alpha method. Alpha value was found to be 0.93, indicating high reliability of the entire instrument. Mean score and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while t-test statistic was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results were presented in tables according to research questions.

RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

What are the guidance and counselling services available in secondary schools in Enugu State?

S/N	Items	Male students			Female students		
		—X	SD	Decision	—X	SD	Decision
1.	I have heard of counselling since I reported to school.	3.56	0.75	A	3.42	0.97	A
2.	The guidance and counselling co-ordinator or the tutors discusses	3.58	0.75	A	3.56	0.75	A

privately what I should do as a student to achieve academic success

3.	The guidance and counselling co-ordinator meets the student body to provide useful career and life guidance	3.26	0.86	A	3.12	0.55	A
4.	The counsellor organizes career conferences for the students	3.42	0.68	A	3.48	0.70	A

Cluster mean	3.38	0.72	A	3.44	0.69	A
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Table 1 Mean Ratings of Male and Female Secondary School students in relations to availability of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Enugu State

The table 1 above showed that the two groups of respondents independently rated all the items in this cluster Agree. In other word they strongly share the view that respondents agreed that they have heard of guidance and counselling during their stay in secondary schools in Enugu State. The cluster means were 3.38 (male students) and 3.44 (for female students) in a four point rating scale with corresponding standard deviation of 0.72 and 0.69 for male and female students respectively.

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

How often do secondary schools students access guidance and counselling services in their schools?

S/N	Items	Male students			Female students		
		—X	SD	Decision	—X	SD	Decision
11.	I have gone to the guidance and counselling co-ordinator to discuss a personal issue	3.64	0.76	A	3.14	0.86	A
12.	My school has a counselling centre	3.65	0.67	A	3.38	0.80	A
13.	I know where to find the counselling office in	3.56	0.63	A	3.31	0.81	A

the school

14.	I go for counselling due to the confidence I have in the counsellor that s/he will not tell anyone	3.66	0.63	A	3.41	0.77	A
15.	I go for counselling because I think the counsellor is well trained to help me	3.55	0.65	A	3.47	0.84	A
16.	The counsellor is available always to address my personal issues	3.71	0.86	A	3.35	0.82	A
17.	I go for counselling because I do not shy someone will find out	3.73	0.45	A	3.06	0.97	A
Cluster mean		3.65	0.66	A	3.32	0.69	A

Table 2: Mean Ratings of Respondents Regarding the accessibility of guidance and counselling services in Secondary Schools in Enugu State

The Table 2 above showed that the two groups of respondents independently rated all the items in this cluster Agree. In other word, students indicated that they knew that their schools had a counselling centre and that they knew where to find the counselling office. Thus, access to guidance and counselling services by students is not hampered by a lack of awareness in secondary schools in Enugu State. The cluster means were of 3.65 (for male students) and 3.32 (for female students). In a four point rating scale with corresponding standard deviation of 0.66 and 0.69 respectively.

HYPOTHESIS ONE

H_{01} : There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the availability of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Group	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-critical	Decision
Male students	350	3.38	0.72	798	0.07	1.96	Not significant
Female students	450	3.44	0.69				

Table 3: t-test of significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the availability of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Enugu State

Table 3 above presented the independent t-test analysis of the mean difference in the response opinions of male and female students on the availability of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Enugu State. The results in table 3 indicated that the calculated t-value (0.07) was less than the critical value (1.96). The null hypothesis was not rejected. Therefore, no significance differences in the mean ratings of male and female students on the availability of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Enugu State.

HYPOTHESIS TWO

H_{02} : There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the students access guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Group	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-critical	Decision
Male students	350	3.65	0.66	798	0.21	0.89	Not significant
Female students	450	3.32	0.69				

Table 4: t-test of significant difference between the mean ratings scores of male and female students on the students access guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Enugu State

Table 4 above presented the independent t-test analysis of the mean difference in the response opinions of male and female students on the students access guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Enugu State. The results in table 4 show that the calculated t-value (0.21) was less than the critical value (0.89). The null hypothesis was not rejected. Therefore, no significance difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the students access guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Enugu State.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

With reference to research question one which dealt with guidance and counselling services available in secondary schools in Enugu State, evidence from the study showed that the respondents shared the view that there is availability of guidance and counselling services that guide student choice of career in secondary schools in Enugu State.. In other words, it shows that the guidance and counselling co-ordinator meets the student body to provide useful career and life guidance. The findings also revealed that the counsellor organizes career conferences for the students. The findings agree with Ezekwesili (2016) who noted that teachers play an important role in providing career information which the school counsellor might not be able to do due to frequency of teachers' meeting with students compared to the counsellor. From the findings it also showed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the availability of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Enugu State.

With reference to research question two, table 2, which dealt with secondary schools accessibility of guidance and counselling services by students in secondary schools in

Enugu State, the respondents share the view that counsellor is always available to address students personal issues on choice of career. The findings agree with kolo (2019) who noted that counsellors who paid little attention to counselees did not encourage students to seek professional counselling help in schools. The findings also revealed that significant difference do not exist between the mean ratings of male and female students on the availability of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Enugu State.

V. CONCLUSION

The study arrived at some conclusions. Firstly, it was realized that guidance and counselling services are available in schools in secondary schools in Enugu State. Students also accessed counselling though the frequency of access was not encouraging. Thirdly, the study showed that students took a positive view of the role counsellor in making career choice especially if the personality and professional commitment of the counsellor were very attractive and convincing..

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were proffered.

- ✓ Guidance and counselling services should not only be available in schools but that counsellors must routinize their activities to benefit students the more. Conferences on career opportunities as well as group counselling should be encouraged.
- ✓ Counsellors and school authorities should create the necessary institutional and psychological foundations that

enables students find it easier to access professional counselling. The location of counselling offices should be encouraging to students to want to seek professional advice.

- ✓ Counsellors must do well to improve their personality and professional know-how to woo more students to the counselling centres in schools. The more personal, professional, attentive, and flexible counsellors are, the greater the students will involve them in the making of decisions about the future.

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