

Career Development Interventions Implemented By Counselors In Secondary Schools In Delta State Of Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated career interventions implemented by counselors in secondary schools. Two research questions were asked and one hypothesis was formulated to guide the study. There was literature review of related materials and it was revealed that in Delta state not much have been done on career interventions which is the gap the study attempts to fill. The study employs an Expos-Facto research design. A sample size of 45 counsellors was drawn from the three senatorial districts in the state from public secondary schools. A checklist was the instrument for the study and interview with the counsellors. The analysis of data was done using mean, standard deviation and t-test. The analysis revealed that of the 21 intervention strategies only three were used more as others were seldomly used or never. The counsellors on their part complained of no finance, time, cooperation from school heads, and so on for not implementing the interventions. The researcher recommended among others that counsellors should be posted to schools and to do the work of counselling alone. Conclusively the main purpose of the research was to ascertain the career interventions implemented by counselors in Delta State. The outcome of the research will be beneficial to counselors, administrators, educators, students and parents. This research is crucial as it will help to widen students horizon about the world of work to avoid inappropriate career choice.

Keywords: career, career development; career interventions; counsellors, secondary schools

INTRODUCTION

According to the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners, career development can be viewed as the life long process of managing learning, working and transitions in order to move toward your preferred future career. This shows that career development is not a single decision. It is a life long process that involves personal experience and chance that have influences in shaping one's career over a life span. It is therein stated in the National Policy on Education (2004) that in apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects and in view of personality maladjustment among school children, career officers and counsellors shall be appointed in post primary institutions. The school counsellors are employed in the schools to help, among others, give good career development to students. School counsellors are experts who are professionally trained in the art and science of helping individuals to resolve their problems and to render various services to students, teachers and parents (Ormrod, 2003; Heward, 2003 in Amoah, Kwofie and Kwofie, 2015). The society is changing and as such the work place is fast becoming more complex (Zunker, 2002). Hence, Feller (2003) opined that counsellors are in a position to assist students to gain and comprehend the workplace. Without a good understanding of the world of work and the happenings, individuals may make inappropriate career choices which will direct the person's efforts into wrong area. No doubt the

counsellors are crucial members of staff in the educational structure that render important help to students including career intervention; Sari (2010) citing Lapan, Gysber and Keyson, 2007; Stone and Dahir, 2006 in Amosah, Kwofie and Kwofie, 2015.

Career interventions are activities designed to explore and enhance a person's career development by helping the person make, implement and benefit from a variety of career decisions. They are activities counsellors in the schools are expected to utilize in enhancing career development among students. Career interventions are not just concerned with inventory in making career choices but how to aid students in their career journey so that at the end they make the best decisions in life.

Career interventions are in different forms which counsellors are supposed to employ in the secondary schools. Some of them are career counselling, career classes, career catalogues, career posters, career simulations, career field trips, career workshops, career maps, career competitions, career libraries, career related videos, students club activities, individual career counselling, group career counselling, occupational interest inventories, assessment interpretations, personality assessment, career day, group assessment interpretations and so on. The question then is: How many of these intervention strategies do counsellors employ in Delta State?

In this study area some works have been done on career development like the one by Obiunu and Ebunu (2014) on factors affecting career development of senior secondary school students, Onoyase and Onoyase (2005) on personality types and career choice but none on career interventions strategy making this study very unique considering the importance of career intervention.

Moreover, in other climes where the study on career interventions have been carried out, the results are quite different. Leug (2002) findings indicates that the implementation in Hong Kong's school was fragmented and superficial; Rashid and Bakar's work (2009) in Malaysia also shows that they tended to be fragmented and superficial. It means many vital aspects were not explored. But then in the work of Rashid, Bakar, Asimaren and Tieg (2009) in the state of Terengganu in Malaysia the subjects which are the counsellors consented to implementing most of the career intervention strategies. The study of Amoah et al (2015) in Ghana on the role of the school counsellor in career choice in which 10 intervention strategies were used, the counsellors agreed that eight of them helped in career choice. The scenario above makes the study very important to ascertain which intervention strategies are used by counsellors in this area and what are their comments on the interventions.

Significance of the Study

This study will be of great significance to counsellors, educators, administrators, students, teachers, parents and the society at large. In the first instance it will add to the body of knowledge. Secondly, counsellors will now understand the strategies that can be implemented in this area to assist students and add to the data on career development. Educators and administrators, on their own part, will equally see the benefits and thereby help to inform policy formation. Students, also will now appreciate the various career interventions and strive to make optimal use of them. Teachers and parents will now be interested in offering their support to such career intervention activities.

Theoretical Stance

The study is anchored on the Learning Theory of Career Counselling (LTCC) by Mitchell and Krumboltz (1996). According to Zunker (2006) career development in LTCC consists of four factors namely (1) genetic endowment and special abilities (2) environmental conditions and events (3) learning experiences, and (4) task approach skills. The first stresses the influences of genetic endowment and special abilities which counsellor should take into consideration in the career development process. The second are factors which are certainly beyond the individual's control. Third is very crucial since it has to do with learning experiences which include

instrumental and associative learning experiences. No doubt the learning experiences over one's life span assists the individual in making career choice; and these interventions are part of the learning experiences that will inform the individual career decision. Individuals should be ready to learn changes in the world of work, environmental conditions and events. All these will boost the individual's career development. The fourth which is task approach skill has to do with skills which the individual has developed which will determine the choice of career of the individual when faced with career decision.

Research Questions

The following research questions were asked to guide the study.

1. What are the various career interventions that counsellors use among secondary school students in Delta State of Nigeria?
2. What is the difference between counsellors location and the use of career interventions?

Hypothesis

One hypothesis guided the study which is:

There is no significant difference between counsellors in rural and urban areas in the use of career interventions.

Purpose

The main purpose of this study was to identify the career intervention strategies used by counsellors in Delta State secondary schools. The study will also ascertain if there are differences between counsellors in urban and rural areas in the use of career interventions.

Limitation of the Study

The limitation of the study lies in its sample size and the fact that its was carried out in one state. This prevents generalization to the population.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Design

The study is a survey, using ex-post-facto design. It is so because there is no manipulation of variables.

Population

The target population for this study consists of all practicing counsellors in public secondary schools in Delta State. The private schools are not included. Most private schools do not have qualified and practicing counsellors.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The purposive sampling process was utilized. This is to enable the researcher select only schools with qualified counsellors. A sample size of 45 counsellors were used. They were drawn from the three senatorial districts in the state.

Instrument

The main instrument for this study is the checklist consisting of 21 career interventions from which counsellors ticked the one that they have implemented. The last item on the checklist was for any other intervention which they have used but not listed and also to get their personal comments on career interventions. The instrument was structured on three point scale of “always”, “seldom” and “never”. They are to respond as to how frequently they employed the career interventions. Moreover, some items in the checklist were adapted from Rashid and Baker (2009) where they listed 30 career interventions.

Data Collection

The checklist was distributed by the researcher to the different counsellors in their schools. She had interview with the counsellors pertaining to career interventions.

Data Analysis

The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze data collected. For the analysis of the research questions, mean and standard deviation were employed. The hypothesis was tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The interview and free comments were equally analyzed. The criteria for decision is 2.00 because it is a three point scale.

Question 1:

What are the various interventions that counsellors use among secondary school students in Delta State of Nigeria?

Question 2:

What is the difference between counsellors location and the use of career interventions among secondary schools in Delta State?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of urban and rural counsellors use of career interventions among secondary school students.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Mean difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
					Lower	Upper
Urban counsellor	27	29.37	13.49			
Rural counsellor	18	26.44	11.52	2.93	-4.895	10.747

Table 2 revealed that there exists a difference between urban and rural counsellors use of career interventions in secondary schools. The mean difference of 2.93 between the two categories was shown in the table along with the 95% confidence interval of the difference showing the lower bound of -4.895 and upper bound of 10.747.

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between counsellors in urban and rural areas in the use of career interventions in secondary schools.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation on the various career development interventions implemented by counsellors among secondary school students

List of Career Interventions	Mean	SD
Career counselling	2.56	0.92
Career classes	1.98	0.94
Career catalogues	1.00	1.09
Career posters	1.40	1.18
Career simulations	0.87	0.97
Career fieldtrips	1.96	0.88
Students club activities	2.04	1.11
Career workshops	1.40	1.27
Individual career counselling	2.51	0.84
Group career counselling	1.98	1.12
Career libraries	0.73	0.84
Career competitions	0.73	0.86
Career maps	0.53	0.79
Career related videos	0.80	0.97
Occupational interest inventories	1.40	1.12
Assessment interpretations	1.02	1.16
Computer assisted career guidance system	0.76	0.96
Personality tests	1.13	1.12
Guidance lessons on career development	1.11	1.17
Career day	1.40	1.16
Group assessment interpretations	0.89	1.07

Source: Data from the field (2018).

Table 1 revealed three career interventions were implemented more by counsellors in Delta State with a mean ranged of 2.04-2.56 which was above the cut off mark of 2.00. They are career counselling with a mean of 2.56, individual career counselling 2.51 and students club activities 2.04. Other types of career interventions implemented were below the cut off mark of 2.00. Some of them are career classes and group counselling with a mean of 1.98 each. Career field trip 1.96, career day 1.40, occupational interest inventory 1.40, career posters 1.40, career workshops 1.40 and personality test 1.13. This definitely shows low implementation of career interventions in the secondary schools in Delta State.

Table 3: Independent t-test analysis of urban and rural counsellors use of career interventions among secondary schools.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	Sig.
Urban counsellor	27	29.37	13.49			
Rural counsellor	18	26.44	11.52	43	0.754	0.455

Table 3 showed that t-calculated value of 0.754 and a p-value of 0.455. Testing the hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value of 0.455 was greater than the alpha level of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis

was retained. This implied that “there was no significant difference between counsellors in urban and rural areas in the use of career interventions among secondary schools.

FINDINGS FROM THE FIELD

The brief interview with counsellors and their comments are summarized as follows:

1. No time for counselling on the time-table
2. Lack of cooperation from the school authority to carry out most of the career interventions
3. Finance to execute some of the career interventions are lacking. One counsellor wrote; the school authority complains of lack of fund to carry out the cheapest career activity in the school.
4. Students, parents and peer group influence among other factors are contributing to non implementation.
5. Some counsellors are giving teaching subjects which makes them to be overworked. This they say gives them limited time for counselling.
6. Most schools do not have practicing counsellors, so how can these career interventions be implemented.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first finding revealed that of the 21 career interventions listed, only three were used more by counsellors. This is not in line with the findings of Rashid et al. (2009) where the counsellors consented to implementing most of the career intervention strategies listed. The study of Amoah et al (2015) did not corroborate this finding as out of the ten interventions listed, the counsellors used eight.

This result can be confirmed from the qualitative reports of the oral interview with the counsellor and their free comments. They commented that most of the strategies were not implemented due to finance. Another was lack of interest on the part of the students, parents and even peer group. Yet another finding was that the counsellors were given subjects to teach instead of counselling. Some complained that there was no time for counselling since it was not specified on the time table. This gave little or no time for counselling. Some others even complained of lack of cooperation from the school authorities to carry out the interventions. The interview reports throw light on why the findings were not corroborated by other studies.

The findings from research question two on the difference between counsellors' location and the use of career interventions revealed a difference exists. The finding from the hypothesis shows no significant difference. This implies that whatever condition applied to counsellors in the rural areas also applies to counsellors in urban areas. The qualitative analysis

shows this. Moreover, all the counsellors are from the same state.

CONCLUSION

The study has established that no proper career interventions activities are carried out in the state. The counsellors do not have all that is required to practice full counselling. Due to lack of materials and finance; counsellors are handicapped in carrying out career interventions that are supposed to help students in career choice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings and conclusions the following recommendations are made.

1. Government should employ counsellors and post them to schools in all parts of the state. This lack of counsellors came up when the researcher was to write on population and sample. It was discovered that many schools were without practicing counsellors.
2. Counsellors should be provided with finance and necessary materials to enable them organize the career interventions. Without adequate finance, career interventions will not see the light of day.
3. The school personnel should be encouraged to cooperate with the counsellors so that counselling work and career interventions can be well organized.
4. Moreover, the school authorities and the Ministry of Education should endeavour to create time for counselling in the schools.
5. The counsellors on their own part, should try and take some proactive measures like classroom visitation, address on the assembly ground to see how these interventions are implemented. They can coopt non governmental organizations and the private sector to assist them in this direction.
6. Moreover, Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) should discuss with the ministry officials on the need to include counselling time on the time table.

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