

Role of Carl Roger's Person Centred Therapy on Secondary School Students Career Choice in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the role of Carl Roger's Person Centred-Therapy on Secondary School Students Career Choice in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. It specifically sought to identify the role of the Person Centred Approach in the Career choice of secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. The population for the study was fifty nine (59) school counsellors and they were all used to collect the data for the study so no sampling was done using self-structured questionnaire developed by the researchers called Person Centered Approach in Career Choice' Scale (PCAICCS). Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument. The design of the study was the descriptive survey research design. Data collected for this study were analyzed using mean, grand mean and standard deviation to answer the four research questions while the four research hypotheses were tested using t-test statistics. The result obtained from the analysis showed among others that the role of the Person Centred Therapy in the career choice of secondary school students enables clients to get relevant information about abilities and skills in terms of related qualification and competencies required to take up the identified occupation so as not to be influenced by an external force. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that Persons that offer career advice to students should ensure that they are well informed so as to provide accurate information that will lead students to correct career choice. The researchers therefore suggests that further research could be carried out on the relevance of persons centered therapy in other education Zones both within and outside Enugu State and Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria.

Keywords: Person Centred Therapy, Career Choice, Secondary School Students, School Counsellors

INTRODUCTION

For an individual to develop holistically and attain self actualization, he/she needs to be informed educationally, vocationally and personal socially. Anything short of this, will produce an unhealthy and imbalanced personality which naturally will possess the tendencies of manifesting abnormal behaviour in career related behaviour. Any career related behaviour that has the tendencies to manifest abnormal behaviour automatically

calls for the assistance of a career counsellor. Thus, the primary goal of career counsellors is to make it possible for an individual to explore and discover his/her unlimited endowed options in life.

In doing this, many counselling theories and models are employed. It is against this backdrop that the Person Centered Therapy propounded by Carl Rogers comes to the fore. Carl Rogers, the father of Person Centered Approach dedicated himself to humanistic psychology. Incidentally, the theorist too had a struggle with choice of career. Initially, he made a choice in Agriculture as a career. Later on, due to his very pious and religious background, he decided to become a clergy man and even received graduate training at the Union Theological Seminary, New York in pursuance of his latest career. Apparently not settled with this choice, and having been exposed to educators and Psychologists, he moved on to become a psychologist in 1928 [1].

Consequently, his observations and experience while interacting with clients at the Rochester Guidance Centre New York culminated in the development of the Client Centered Theory which was later changed to Person Centred theory [1]. Believing that man has the capacity to make constructive decisions and solve his own problems given the right setting, he became a strong advocate of self exploration, self discovery and self realization. Thus, self-concept is very fundamental to the theory of Carl Rogers.

Person centered therapy, as with other humanistic and existential approaches, can be understood as a form of counselling and psychotherapy which puts particular emphasis on “conceptualizing, and engaging with people in a deeply valuing and respectful way” [2]. As a consequence of this, a key element of person centered thought is a rejection of psychological and psychotherapeutic systems which strive to reduce individual human experiences down to nomothetic, universal laws and mechanisms. Rather, there is an emphasis on viewing each human being “as a unique entity, unlike any other person who has existed or will exist” [3]. In other words, while person centered theorists have argued

that certain psychological features, such as the need for positive regard or conditions of worth [4], are universal, there is a particular emphasis on the fact that each human being is distinctive, irreplaceable and in exchangeable. [4], for instance, stated that person centered therapy “is not centred on what a general client would or should be. It is not centered on a theory external to the client.... The focus of the therapist is entirely on understanding the client as an individual, in all his uniqueness, from moment to moment.”

In Rogers’ work, this idiographic emphasis is particularly evident in his assertion of the “fundamental predominance of the subjective” [5]. Each individual, for [4], “exists in a continually changing world of experience of which he is the center”; and, given that this ever-changing phenomenological experiencing will be unique to the individual, the very essence of each human reality is distinct. [5] idiographic emphasis is also evident in his critical stance towards diagnosis, preferring to view human beings as unique, individual organisms rather than as manifestations of trans-individual dysfunctional states.

This emphasis on the psychological irreducibility of each client, however, is not merely a theoretical assumption, but is rooted in a deep ethical commitment within the person centered field to engaging with an Other in a profoundly honouring way. Here, the work of the French philosopher [6] has been particularly. From this standpoint, then, it is not just that each human being is unique, but that each human being is so unique that they can never be fully understood by another: Their difference, at least to some extent, is transcendent. This is similar to [3] statement that the private world of the individual “can only be known, in any genuine or complete sense, to the individual himself.”

This idiographic emphasis within the person centered approach is associated with a theory of psychotherapeutic change in which there is a particular emphasis on helping clients to actualize their distinctive potential and become their “own unique individual self” [7]. Person centered therapy aims at providing clients with a set of therapeutic conditions in which they can reconnect with their actual, individual experiences and valuing processes,

moving away from a reliance on more external, “levelled down”[3], judgments and introjects.

An emphasis on the distinctiveness of each human being and their change processes also means that each individual’s needs and wants can be considered, at least to some extent, unique and unknowable. [8] wrote that the process of actualization - the motivational tendency underpinning all growth and development - “is always unique to the individual”[8]; and he described it as an “idiosyncratic” process that cannot be predicted (or determined) by another. A commitment to supporting the actualization of the Other in their own, unique way also reflects a fundamental person centred ethic of respect for the client’s autonomy [9]. [10] has argued that the basis for person-centred therapy lies in the ethic of “respecting the right of self determination of others” [9]. Similarly, [11] stated that “a fundamental value of humanistic therapists is their belief that people have the right, desire, and ability to determine what is best for them and how they will achieve it.” In [7], terms, this could be described as a fundamental ethical commitment to letting the other be in all their Otherness: a “non-allergic reaction with alterity.”

Consequent upon the above fact, knowing that people have the right, desire, and ability to determine what is best for them and how they will achieve it simply means that choosing a career path is a huge part of a young man or woman’s life. Career is a pattern of decision, transactions and adjustments related to one’s role in work, education, family, community and leisure.

Career selection is one of many important choices students will make in determining future plans. This decision will impact them throughout their lives. The essence of who the student is will revolve around what the student wants to do with their life-long work. According to [6] in [12] career covers the sequence of positions, jobs or occupations in the life of an individual.

The career path students choose affects how they will live the rest of their life. A lot of students go through Secondary School without knowing what career path they want. Before students can pick a career path they need to experience what that career is like and what it

involves. There are many careers which male or female students may choose. Career guidance helps the students to select the career according to their choice and interest. Career counselling is now being increasingly stressed as an integral part of education. In order to secure the right job, the right career choice is foremost in the minds of every job seeker with /without professional qualifications. In choosing a career, the career counsellor should be able to assess the interests, needs and priorities of the client vis-a-vis job requirement. [13].

Consequently, his observations and experience while interacting with clients at the Rochester Guidance Centre culminated in the development of the Client Centered Theory which was later changed to Person Centred theory [1]. Believing that man has the capacity to make constructive decisions and solve his own problems given the right setting, he became a strong advocate of self exploration, self discovery and self realization. Thus, self-concept is very fundamental to the theory of Carl Rogers.

Generally, counsellors are frequently called upon to assist clients in making career choices since indisputably, the level of fulfillment or happiness an individual exudes depends to a great extent on the choice of his/her career. Fundamentally, this requires practitioners to act as a resource in order that individuals may experience a sense of support and guidance as they explore various issues related to their career interests. [14] in [15] revealed that:

the client-centered approach is more concerned with the client's present situation rather than his past with the counsellor functioning with open mindedness, neither interpreting nor directing the client. Through egalitarian relationship with the client, the counsellor is able to understand the client and his world and he tries to assist the client to marry his thoughts with his feelings.

In this regard, client-centered involves seeking information about one's self and the environment in ways that facilitates career choice, occupational choice, job entry, and work adjustment [16].

However, the Person centered approach to career choice emphasizes the importance of dealing with clients' personal problems and concerns as they are viewed as the major

obstacles to making meaningful and satisfying long lasting career choices. [4] made an interesting distinction between counselling services that emphasize information sharing about career issues versus those that stress the importance of exploring clients' personal concerns, problems and anxieties. The author referred to the process as gathering and sharing specific information about occupational trends and vocational issues with persons who are not experiencing personal problems with "career choice." However, [4] used the term "career counselling" to specifically describe efforts aimed at helping clients, who are experiencing various personal difficulties, come to grips with their problems in order that they might make effective career choices.

[4] and [16] argued that counsellors cannot (and should not) separate clients' personal problems from their career challenges. Unarguably, there is an interplay between the two. From this perspective, career counsellors are urged to focus on clients' inner lives by helping them explore their emotional concerns and fears in a non-threatening, supportive environment.

Consequent upon the above fact, counsellors are encouraged to use "the person centered approach" as they assist in the exploration of both personal and career issues by following clients' lead and responding to their emotional needs. Thus, by providing personal counselling services, person centered therapy advocates that individuals often manifest a more accurate self-understanding and an increased level of self-respect. These advancements, in turn, allow clients to make more effective and satisfying career decisions [8].

Rogers in [1] opined that man by nature is entitled to his opinions and beliefs and is capable of initiating self-directed behaviours that would culminate in the satisfaction of his choice of career and achievement of his goal. This implies that individual could be left alone to determine how to live, what to do, given some psychological and environmental conditions.

In this light, counselling for a choice of career is directed by the client's subjective perception and expressions. The role of the counsellor therefore, is to facilitate self directed behaviour on the part of the client. This may be why [4] noted that the best vantage point for understanding behaviour is from the internal frame of reference of the individual himself" [18]. In the same line of thought, he expatiated thus:

... It is counsellors function to assume, in so far as he is able, the internal frame of reference of the client, to perceive the world as the client sees it, to perceive the client himself as he is seen by himself, to lay aside all perceptions from the external frame of reference while doing so, and to communicate something of this empathic understanding to the client."p.171.

In other words, the counsellor's responsibility is to facilitate a higher degree of self-realization, which in turn will give the client freedom for self-exploration and more effective utilization of his capacities.

This by implication means that a client knows his problems better and as such stands in a better position to find appropriate solution to his career choice. In practice, this may not be highly obtainable in the Nigeria context, particularly in some communities where even choice of subjects taken in schools and career options are made for an individual either by parents, relatives or elders. Going further on this, the role of person centre therapist in career choice of secondary school students is to help the client make an appropriate career choice by providing the client with adequate career information. There is a conflict of interest since what the student does is more important than what the teacher does. Secondly, the techniques utilized by the person centered therapy holds that the client has the responsibility to freely express his/her feelings in relation to his/her problems or experience. It then behoves the therapist to understand the client from his own perception of himself/herself and to effectively communicate same understanding.

This would stimulate the actualizing forces within him to initiate growth directed behaviours. This runs contrary to the conventional method of counselling whereby the counsellor sits as an expert and gives instruction to the clients. Thirdly, on the impact on theoretical stance, the person-centered therapy is founded on the three "core conditions"

of congruence, empathy and unconditional positive regard, which were reduced from the original six and which the counsellor alone brings to the relationship [19]. The person centered approach is not concerned with finding out the causes of the problem and finding the best solution possible. It is the individual client, in an open and accepting relationship with the therapist, who is empowered to solve his problems. Fourthly, apart from environmental factors that influenced [8] choice of career, another determinant factor is his home and religious background, coming from a pious religious background also moved him to attempt becoming a clergy. Apparently not settled with this choice, and having been exposed to educators and Psychologists, he moved on to become a psychologist in [1]. At this point, Rogers was actually looking for some elements of interest and ability that could match his career choice[17,18].

To this end, the objective of this study is to expose the Relevance of Carl Roger's Person-Centred-Therapy in Secondary School Students Career Choice in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Individuals in all works of life require guidance and counselling to make intellectual choices and adjustment in life. Educational and career counselling becomes particularly essential for students who are at the stage of choosing their field of study for their future careers. To a very great extent, this service is supposed to be obtainable in all secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. The extent to which this actually is being obtained and how effective these counselling sessions are remains an issue that needs to be addressed.

Observation have shown that many students face challenges in choosing the right subjects combination and in making appropriate career choices because they do not get appropriate guidance on choosing subjects and making career choices relating to their inclinations, abilities, interests and aptitudes. This is likely because the school curriculum again is structured in such a manner that the individual is not taken cognizance of. Often times too,

counselling process is carried out based on the school curriculum which does not give room to the natural endowments of a student. Consequently, over-dependence on the school curriculum poses a problem to the Secondary School Students in their bid to make suitable career choices

To ignore the whole person while educating him/her is to lose a golden opportunity to fulfil the true meaning of education, which is to enrich people's lives thereby enhancing a golden opportunity for students in making a career choice. Again, external interference from parents and other significant others in the life of the student could be misleading in the choice of career for a student. Most parents sometimes want their children to choose their profession so as to close the vacuum of who takes over when they are no more. Worse still is the fact that some parents force and talk their children into certain career not minding if it is in line with the child's interest, aptitude and ability. The student/client is bound to comply irrespective of his own values, interests, because he does not even have the opportunity to express his opinion and he must obey his parent/elders. More often than not, a conflict usually ensues later, leading to misalignment, regrets, maladjustment and if not well handled, abnormal behaviour sets in.

Thus, unwillingness or inability of the parents to perceive issues from their children's point of view becomes a fundamental problem for the student to actualize himself through making a choice of career. It is evident therefore, that lack of effective educational and career counselling is one of the problems faced by male/female students in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State, Nigeria. This is the problem and the crux of this study which is aimed at ascertaining the role of Carl Rogers Centered therapy on secondary school students career choice in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

Research Question

This research question was raised to guide the study

- (i) What is the role of the Person Centered therapy in career choice of secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

This research hypothesis was formulated to guide the study and was tested at .05 level of significance.

- (i) There is no significant difference in the mean scores of guidance counsellors and teacher counsellors on the role of the Person Centered approach in Career choice of secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

METHOD

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design and was conducted in all the 31 secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. The population for the study consisted of all the 59 school counsellors currently serving in these 31 secondary schools. The population is small and manageable so no sampling was done. The researchers developed a self-structured instrument called Person Centred Approach in Career Choice Scale (PCACC-S) with a 4-point response format for data collection. The instrument has 13 items and was face validated by 3 experts -one in Measurement and Evaluation and the remaining 2 in guidance and counselling. The internal consistency of PCACC-S was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate and a similar population (15 school counsellors) from Udi Education Zone. The reliability coefficient stood at .63. To collect data for the study, the researchers employed the assistance of the Zonal Coordinator of counselling services in the Zone whom they trained in a one-day consultative meeting. 59 copies of PCACC-S was distributed to the respondents but the researchers and their research assistant were able to retrieve 57 copies signifying 96.61 return of dully filled copies of the administered instrument. Mean, standard deviation and grand mean were used to answer the research question while the t-test statistic was used to test the research hypothesis at .05 level of significance. The decision rule for research

questions and the interpretation of the respondents responses is that for any item whose mean score is equal to or greater than 2.50 is regarded as agree, while any item whose mean score is less than 2.50 is regarded as disagree. For the research hypothesis, the decision rule was that if the calculated t-value is greater than the table t value at a chosen confidence level (.05) and a degree of freedom ($n_1 - n_2 - 2$) the null hypothesis of no significant difference is rejected, if on the other hand that the calculated t-value is less than the value of the t-critical from the table, then the null hypotheses is not rejected.

Analysis of Data

Research Question 1: What is the role of the Person Centered therapy in career choice of secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Scores on the Role of the Person Centred Approach in Career Choice of Secondary School Students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

S/N	As a Person Centred therapist what are your roles in the Career choice of secondary school students in Enugu Education zone.	Responses				Mean	SD	Decision
		4	3	2	1			
		SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}		
1	help students in job placement	21	19	13	4	3.00	0.94	Agree
2	provide people with information where they can get jobs	29	11	9	8	3.07	1.12	Agree
3	give students a list of careers	43	9	4	1	3.65	0.69	Agree
4	give students wrong choice of jobs	1	2	5	49	1.30	0.76	Disagree
5	help students to get the right careers	33	17	4	3	3.40	0.84	Agree
6	Assist clients to choose the right type of jobs	27	15	11	4	3.14	0.97	Agree
7	Development of client's concept	19	17	12	9	2.80	1.08	Agree
8	develop entrepreneurship qualities in clients for taking up self-employment trade	23	15	13	6	2.96	1.03	Agree
9	enables clients to get relevant information about abilities and skills in terms of related qualification and competencies required to take up the identified occupation	25	19	11	2	3.18	0.87	Agree
10	gives clients false information about abilities and skills in terms of related qualification and competencies required to take up the identified occupation	1	2	17	37	1.72	0.99	Disagree
11	assists clients in developing abilities to analyse occupational information and make suitable choice by using appropriate career information effectively	41	7	5	4	3.49	0.93	Agree
12	assists clients in getting information about various post educational and training facilities and apprenticeship	37	19	9	2	3.25	0.85	Agree
13	assists clients to acquire knowledge of the characteristics, functions, duty requirements of occupations in which they are interested	27	13	9	2	3.25	0.85	Agree
N=57		Grand Mean				2.96		Agree

Table 1 shows that out of the 13 items on the role of the Person Centred Approach in Career choice of secondary school students, the respondents agreed with 11 of the items (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12 and 13) with mean scores of (3.00, 3.07, 3.65, 3.40, 3.14, 2.80, 2.96, 3.18, 3.49, 3.49 and 3.25) respectively which is above the cut-off point of 2.50. They however disagreed with 2 of the items (4 and 10) with 1.30 and 1.72 as their recorded mean scores. Their standard deviation for all the items are small signifying that there is homogeneity in the responses of the respondents. The table also indicated that the respondents recorded a grand mean score of 2.96. Thus, the answer to research question one is that the roles of the persons centered approach in career choice of students in Enugu Education Zone as follows: helping students in job placement; providing students with information where they can get jobs; giving students a list of careers; students get right careers; enabling clients to choose the right type of jobs; development of client's concept; development of entrepreneurship qualities in clients for taking up self-employment trade; enabling clients to get relevant information about abilities and skills in terms of related qualification and competencies required to take up the identified occupation; assists clients in developing abilities to analyse occupational information and make suitable choice by using appropriate career information effectively; etc.

Research Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean scores of guidance counsellors and teacher counsellors on the role of the Person Centered approach in Career choice of secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

Table 5: t-test Result of the Mean Rating of Guidance Counsellors and Teacher Counsellors on the Role of the Person Centred Therapist in Career Choice of Secondary School Students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Guidance Counsellors	20	2.96	0.47	55	0.91	NS ±1.96	Do not reject H_{01}
Teacher Counsellors	37	2.59					
	57	5.55					

Significant at $P < .05$, $df = 55$, critical t-value = ±1.96

The t-test analysis in table 2 above indicates that the calculated t- value is 0.91 while the critical t-value is ±1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the calculated t-value is less than the critical the critical t- value. Going by the decision rule the null hypothesis of no significant difference is not rejected. Thus, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of Guidance counsellors and Teacher counsellors on the role of the Person Centred therapist in the Career choice of secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first research question sought to identify the role of the Person Centred Therapist in Career choice of secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. It was found that helping students in job placement; providing students with information where they can get jobs; giving students a list of careers; enabling clients to get relevant information about abilities and skills in terms of related qualification and competencies required to take up the identified occupation so as not be influenced by an external force are the roles of the Person Centred Approach in Career Choice of Secondary School students. This finding affirms those of [6] who found that therapists can provide students with information where they can get jobs, occupations etc and therapist also assists students to recognize their abilities and skills. This by implication gives students the privilege of choosing what and how to learn as well as methods of evaluation. Critically,

it simply means that in the present day Nigeria, this approach is not likely to be fruitful and the goals of formal education are not likely to be achieved. This is because the average Nigerian child would prefer the easiest, most convenient, and probably a selfish approach to the choice of what and how to learn and how he wishes to be evaluated, irrespective of their outcomes in relation to the achievement of his/her desired goals. Thus, there is need for school counsellors to reorient students and assist them make and take life long decisions that are profiting.

The first research hypothesis tried to identify if there is a significant difference in the mean scores of Guidance counsellors and Teacher counsellors on the role of the Person Centred Therapist in Career choice of secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. The analysis of the t-test comparison according to Table 2 showed that the computed t (0.47) is less than the critical t-value (± 1.96) at .05 level of significance. With regard to the decision rule, research hypothesis one shows that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of Guidance counsellors and Teacher counsellors on the role of the Person Centred Approach in Career choice of secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. This finding is in line with the view of [6], who held that guidance counsellors and teacher counsellors are duty bound to provide students with information where they can get jobs, occupations etc. [1] also opined that therapists assist students to recognize their abilities and skills. In the researchers view, the individual is not compelled to make do with what is provided in the curriculum by teacher or guidance counsellors rather he/she is guided without interference in making a better career choice.

Educational Implication of the Finding

The findings of this study holds implication for students, teachers, career guidance, policymakers, educationalists and employers in Enugu Education zone .

For students to be successful in their career choice they need to make informed career decisions. This will entail the individual been part of the process, having been equipped with appropriate information. It is hoped future policy and curriculum development within this area will be able to form students as stakeholder as this study demonstrates the importance of the clients as an architect of his life. For students to be ready for tomorrow they must be able to use their minds and their hands, be problem solvers, think critically, analyse data and communicate effective. The best way to achieve this is through authentic work placements linked to rigorous academic learning and holistic careers education.

The challenge for policymakers, educationalists and employers should ensure that the career education and the guidance students receive during their school years meet these requirements in order to allow them reach their full career potentials and thereby contribute their own little quota fully to society otherwise the effect will be very disastrous (poor choice of career/ineffective career choice) since it will not allow the individual to develop his/her potential fully.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the implications of the study the following recommendations were made;

1. Professional career counsellor should be consulted to assist students in planning and choosing their careers.
2. Professional career counsellors should include the student in the selection process, considering interest, ability, skills and personality of the student.
3. Career counsellors should provide students with experiences that expand their exploration process and a wide range of career information on all the available careers so that they will be well equipped to explore widely before making their choices.
4. The study further recommends that, after initial career decisions have been made, career counsellors can continue to encourage successful career development by identifying sources of psychosocial support available to students.

5. Persons that offer career advice to students should ensure that they are well informed so as to provide accurate information that will lead students to correct career choice.

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