

School Counsellor Role in Career Decision Making of Secondary School Students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined school counsellors role in career decision making of secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu state Nigeria. One research question and one null hypotheses guided the study. The hypothesis was tested at .05 level of confidence. the study adopted the survey research design using a population of 59 school counsellors in the 31 secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. No sampling was done as the number is small and manageable. An 11 item self-structured instrument called Counselling Role in Career Decision Making Scale (CRCDMS) developed by the researcher's validated by three experts was used to collected data for the study. The reliability coefficient stood at .71 using Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate. Mean with standard deviation was used to answer the research question, while the hypothesis was tested with t-test statistic. The study found that school counsellors role in career decision making are: Helping to create vocational opportunities, options and awareness for students, fostering career management strategies by helping students develop the skills for effectively managing their careers, assisting students in job placement, helping students to plan their education through career guidance, helping to make positive difference in ones career in life, reducing career anxiety, helping to provide students with information as whether they can get jobs; giving students a list of careers and the subjects they need to study to get into such careers and assisting students to realize their career based on their interests, aptitude and ability. School counsellors gender has a significant effect on their roles in the career decision making of secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State - Nigeria. The researchers recommended that the Ministry of Manpower, Labour and Productivity should house with school counsellors so as to acquaint them with what is in the labour market.

Keywords: Counsellors role and career decision making

INTRODUCTION

Secondary school students are all adolescents who in their growth process experience lots of stress and storm. Little wonder why the Federal Government of Nigeria had to ensure guidance and counselling into her National Policy on Education giving room for the employment of counsellor in schools to assist the student behave and assist them find long lasting solutions to the challenges they meet in their growth process. The roles of school counsellors

in any school setting according to [1] include:

- Taking charge of establishing school guidance programme
- Coordinating the guidance programme in schools
- Defining the objectives of the school guidance program for the benefit of the principals, teachers, partners and the students
- Helping too disseminate career information of the students

- Playing major role in the identification of the guidance needs of the students
- Supervising the building and maintenance of student's cumulative records in schools
- Providing relevant data for the placement of students in the transition from junior to senior secondary schools
- Assisting parents in relating student's interest, attitudes and abilities to current future educational, occupational opportunities and requirement
- Providing counselling service to students regarding their educational vocational and personal social concern
- Assisting students and parents to understand procedures for applying to higher institutions and for financing students education
- Financing as a resource person to teach in exhibited classroom

More to the above, the school system provides a medium through which students can be trained towards a goal, which usually ends up in a career. The school counsellor with a developmental purpose prepares students using their educational resources to attain a career choice. This school counsellors do according to [2] through:

- Information services by providing useful and purposeful information by which students can make effective and sound educational and career decisions knowing the type of subjects that are available in the school, knowing which subjects to choose, combining the right subjects which can lead to a desired streaming in Senior Secondary School and gaining insight into institutions of higher learning where training can be offered are some educational and career information that school counsellors can provide:
- Orientation services by giving needed information with a guide as to the use of such information makes it relatively easy for

- students to adjust to new environments or situations. Newly admitted students are introduced to their school through orientation programmes designed to cover their adjustment to classrooms, the boarding house, the library etc. Counselling which is concerned with the understanding and adjustment of individuals within their environment for self growth underscores the need for counsellors to partake in orientation programmes.
- Vocational development and career education by mounting activities such as career talks, careers trips, symposiums conventions etc, students are able to learn to make meaning out of their educational pursuits. Counsellors should, apart from these activities, guide students on how to complete job forms and forms into higher institution; they should teach students interviewing skills and keep a listing of job agencies and vacancies that exist within the community.
 - Placement services by assisting students who have completed educational requirements at prescribed school levels, counsellors are able to seek assistance from industries, governmental agencies or private employers in creating job opportunities or placing students according to their capacities
In fulfilling the placement function, counsellors need to teach students various skills, relating to employment job seeking and job-getting; staying on the job; writing application letters or filling application forms and interviewing.
- [3] in [4] remarked that Guidance Counsellor should have the competency as:
- To facilitate career/life choice's through the lifespan

- To facilitate educational choices through the lifespan
- To facilitate personal choices through the lifespan

Facilitation of career/life choices through the lifespan

Guidance Counsellors have knowledge of the major vocational guidance theories, understand the theoretical origins of career development and use a theoretical framework to understand individual career development.

[5] held that to facilitate career life choices through lifespan development:

- Describe change and transition in the context of lifespan career development
- Help individuals adopt to and manage change and transition
- Help individuals understand and accept that change and transition are normal parts of life

Guidance counsellors according to [6] should demonstrate the ability to describe work/life balance in the context of lifespan career development in the following ways:

- Understand the need to balance the multiple roles assumed by individual throughout their career development
- Understand and integrate into practice that making a living is only one component of one's identity
- Understand that individuals, their values and the environment are interdependent
- Can foster career management strategies by helping individuals develop the skills to effectively manage their careers
- helping individuals understand that career management is a lifelong process
- Helping individuals understand how societal trends play a major role in career management
- Promoting individuals independence and self confidence

- Increasing individuals awareness of opportunities and options
- Understanding and agreeing on possible outcomes
- Working out steps needed to make and implement a decision so individuals achieve goals

Furthermore, is to help people experiencing difficulty to overcome or cope with it and to understand the environment very well so that they can anticipate, circumvent and if possible, forestall difficulties which may rise in future, thereby preventing students from falling into them. it is also the role of a counsellor to help individuals to plan and drive maximum benefits from educational, social and vocational experiences which will enable them to discover and develop their potentials [7]. in order to do this, the counsellor should be a trusted confidant to all learners by showing a positive attitude and disseminating and receiving appropriate information from counselees. The information so gathered should also be used to help each student to strengthen his/her own ability [8]. School counsellors should also work in cooperation with their teachers and significant others in the life of the school to identify each student's unique and special mental ability, aptitude and creativity then use same to assist her/him to develop a realistic self-image. [9] also underscores this by saying that a counsellor should be one who is knowledgeable about the nature and pattern of problems that students are likely to deal with and the adjustment mechanisms that they use when they are unbalanced or uncomfortable.

Much as the Nigeria government has recognized the importance of guidance and counselling in her educational institutions, it has not, however, provide the resources necessary for creating a conducive environment for offering the services. [10] recommended that schools should provide facilities which will allow school counsellors to have equipment, materials and travel allowances necessary for them to carry out their functions. The funds thus provided would enable the counsellor to get regular supply of books,

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journals, magazines and visual aid materials, which in turn will equip her/him with current and accurate information for students.

A counsellor will also require to occasionally inviting a specialist to talk to students or to take them out for tours based on relevant issues. Unfortunately, many educational institutions do not set aside such funds. [11] noted that counsellors have inadequate facilities and this makes it difficult for an effective implementation of the guidance programme. [12] observed that there should be private and confidential areas for counselling. Chairs should be comfortable, preferably with arms and the room should have enough lighting. [13], also noted that an ideal guidance and counseling centre should be a large room with display racks, bulletin boards and tables where materials can be a large room with displayed. The room can be used for holding discussions, showing films or holding parents forums, teachers form, group counselling. Unfortunately, most secondary schools in Nigeria do not have even an office for the schools counsellors. Besides that, guidance and counselling is not timetabled and lacks enough staff to deliver the services. Therein which are very in assisting students in solving the problems they meet in their growth process echoing this [11] opined that secondary school students in Nigeria experience a variety of emotional, social, academic and psychological problems for which they need support in order to enable them to

The study adopted the survey research design and was carried out in all the 31 secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. the population for the study was 59 school counsellors of which 21 are males and the remain 38 are females. the population is small and manageable so, no sampling was done. The researchers developed a self-structured instrument called counsellors role and career decision making scale (CRCDM). It had 12 items and a 4 point response option. Strong

Onuorah and Ogbodo

go through life. [9] remarked that guidance and counselling in secondary school can help learners to grow in self-understanding, develop their capabilities for making career decisions, progress and achieve an all round growth besides just problem solving. [7] opined that the individual is mostly responsible for what he becomes, meaning that it solely lies in his responsibility to take such action towards change in case of problems which he wants to have solved. It is the client who must facilitate his own change. It follows therefore, that the counsellor and the client must build a relationship in which the counsellor succeeds empowering the client to take action towards change in the solution finding process. For these to be school counsellor must live out their roles and ensure that their clients are able to find their feet in the labour market later in life. This is the crux of this study which is aimed at ascertaining the role of school counsellors in career decision making of secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

Research Question

What are the roles of school counsellors in the career decision making of secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

there is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female school counsellor in career decision making of secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

agree (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3 points; Disagree (D) = 2 points and strongly disagree (SD) = 1 point. It was used to collect data for the study from the respondents. It was face validated by three experts two in guidance and counselling and one in measurement and evaluation all from the Faculty of Education, Enugu. The internal consistence of CRCDM was ascertained after a pilot study conducted at Udi Education Zone of Enugu State with a similar population of 15 school

counsellors using the Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate. The reliability coefficient obtained was .73. The researchers distributed 59 copies of CRCDM to the respondents with the help of three research assistants that were trained in a one day consultative meeting. Finally, there were able to retrieve 53 of them signifying .83 percent rate of duely filled copies of the administered instrument. Mean with standard deviation were used to research question while the t-test statistics was employed for testing the null hypothesis at .05 level of confidence. For making inferences a cutoff point of 2.50 was used as the bench mark. Thus for the research

questions any item with a mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as agree, while any mean score below 2.50 was interpreted as disagree. For the null hypothesis, if the t-calculated is less than +1.96 at the required degree of freedom (df=51) the hypothesis was not rejected but if the calculated t -value was equal to or greater than the t-calculated value, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Research Question 1: What are the roles of school counsellors in career decision making of secoundary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria

Table 1: Mean rating of school counsellors on the role of school counsellors in career decision making of secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

S/N	Role of school counsellors in career decision making	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1	Help students creates vocational opportunities, options and awareness	25	15	10	3	3.16	0.93	A
2	Helps students foster career management strategies by helping them develop the skills to effectively manage their careers	19	17	13	4	2.96	0.96	A
3	Understand the need to balance the multiple roles assumed by individuals throughout their career development	4	9	19	21	1.92	0.93	D
4	Helps students in job placement	31	13	7	2	3.37	0.85	A
5	All students should consult their school counsellors when making career decision	8	11	15	19	2.15	1.08	D
6	Providing students career guidance helps students in education planning	27	18	6	2	3.32	0.82	A
7	Helps make a positive difference in one's career life	23	21	7	2	3.22	0.82	A
8	Reduce career anxiety	29	11	9	4	3.22	0.99	A
9	Provides people with information where they can get jobs	33	13	5	2	3.45	0.82	A
10	Give students a list of careers and the subjects needed to be studied to get into such career	25	13	11	4	3.11	0.99	A
11	Give career guidance to students to motivate them to make and take appropriate decisions	4	9	15	25	1.84	0.96	A
12	Assist students to realize their career dreams based on their interest, aptitude and ability	37	9	4	3	3.50	0.86	A
N = 53 Grand Mean						2.93		A

Table 1 show that of the 12 items on the role of school counselors in career decision making of secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria, that respondents agreed with 9 of the items, 1, 2,4,6,7,8,9,10,and 12 as they recorded mean scores of 3.16, 2.96, 3.37, 3.32, 3.32, 3.45,3.11 and 3.50 which are above the cut-off point of 2.50. They however, disagreed with 3 of the items 3,5, and 11 with mean scores of 1.92, 2.15 and 1.84. The standard deviation for all the items are small signifying that the respondents' responses are clustered around the mean showing that there is homogeneity in their responses for the items raised. The table also shows that the respondents' grand mean score for the items is 2.93. Based on the decision rule for the interpretation of the respondents data, the answer to research question 1 is that the roles of school counselors in career decision making of

secondary school students are: to help students to create vocational opportunities, options and awareness for students fostering career management strategies by helping students develop the skills to effectively manage their career assisting students in job placement, helping students plan their education through career guidance, help make positive differences in one's career life, reducing career anxiety, providing students with information as to where they can get jobs, giving students a list of the subjects they need to study to get into such careers and assisting students to realize their career dreams based on their interest aptitude and ability.

Research Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean score of male and female school counsellors in career decision making of secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

Table 2: t-test result of male and female school counsellors in career decision making of secondary school students in secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria

Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	35	2.93	0.37	53	2.40	+1.96	S reject H ₀ ,
Female	18	2.57	0.21				

Significant at P<.05, df= 53, critical t-value =+1.96

The t-test analysis in table 2 above indicates that the calculated t-value is 2.40 while the critical t-value is +1.96 at .05 level of significance and a df of 51. This implies that the calculated t-value is greater than the critical value thus, going by the bench mark for the interpretation of the result obtained from the analysis, there is a significant difference in mean score of male and female school counselors in career decision making of secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. The study revealed that the roles of school counselors in career decision making of secondary school students in

Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State Nigeria help students to creates vocational opportunities, options and awareness, helping students to foster career management strategies by helping them to develop the skills to effectively manage their careers, helping students in job placement, helping students in planning their education through career guidance , assisting students to make positive difference in one's career life, reducing careers anxiety, providing students with information where they can get jobs, giving students a list of the subjects they need to study to get into such careers and assisting students to

realize their career dreams, based on their interests, aptitudes and ability.

The research hypothesis tried to ascertain if there is a significant difference in the mean scores of the role of male and female school counselors in career decision making of secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State Nigeria. The analysis of the t-test comparison in table 2 shows that the computed t (2.4) is greater than the critical t -value (+1.96) at .05 level of significance. With regard to the decision rule, research hypothesis 1 which held that there is no significant differences in the mean scores of the roles of male and female school counselors in career decision making of secondary school

students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State Nigeria. The findings at reject is consistent with the observations of [5] who held that the role of guidance counselors in an institution is to: help people experiencing difficulty to overcome or cope with it and to understand the environment very well so that she/he can anticipate, circumvent and if possible, forestall difficulties which may arise in future, therefore preventing students from falling into them. It is also the role of school counsellors to help individuals to plan and derive maximum benefits from educational, social and vocational experiences which will enable them to discover and develop their potentials.

CONCLUSION

Conclusively therefore, the role of school counselors in the career decision making of secondary school students include but not limited to helping to create vocational opportunities, options and awareness for students, fostering career management for effectively manage their career; assisting students in job placement, helping students to plan their education through career guidance; helping to make positive difference in one's career life, reducing career anxiety, providing

students with information as to where they can get jobs and the subjects they need to study to get such jobs and assisting the students to realize their career dreams based on their interest aptitude and ability. Gender was found to have a significant differences in the mean ratings of school counsellors in their roles in the career decision making of secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATION

As a result of the foregoing, the researcher recommended that the Ministry of Manpower and Labour and Productivity, Industries, Private organizations should liaise with school counsellors so as to acquaint them with what is in the labour market. This will go

a long way in relating career issues to students and assist them in making and taking long career decisions that are in line with their dreams and the needs of the society.

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