

Students' Perception of Career Counselling Activities in Selected Secondary School in Uvwie Metropolis, Delta State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study is an investigation of students' perception of career counselling programmes in selected secondary schools in Uvwie metropolis. Two hundred students were randomly selected for the study, forty students were selected from five different schools each in the metropolis. Data collected were subjected to t-test analysis. The results showed that students perceived field trips and career seminars to be effective tools of career education. Significant differences were found between urban and rural school students perception of career counselling activities. Based on this outcome, school counselors are implored to be creative while carrying out career counselling.

Keywords: *Students' perception, career, counselling*

INTRODUCTION

The kind of career an individual is involved in determines the kind of life style, choice of friends, place of abode, income, status in the society. Therefore, for the student to make appropriate career decision, the student must have adequate career education. Career education is the development of skills and knowledge through which individuals may fulfill their unique needs with regard to occupational choice, social responsibility, leisure time activity and personal development (American Institute for Research, 1973). Career education opens up the world of work to the students whereby the student gets the goals of career education (Denga, 1982). The aim is to produce school leavers at any level and at any age who are:

- i. Competent in the basic academic skills required for adaptability in our rapidly changing society; equipped with good work habits.
- ii. Capable of choosing and who have chosen a personally meaningful set of work values that lead them to possess a desire to work.
- iii. Equipped with career decision – making skills job hunting and job getting skills at a level that attains a degree of success in the occupational society.
- iv. Equipped with career decisions that they have made based on the widest possible set of data concerning themselves and their educational vocational opportunities.

- v. Aware of means available to them for continuing and recurrent education once they left the formal system of education.
- vi. Successful in incorporating work into total personal value structure in such a way that they are able to choose what, for them is desirable life style.

These are the major goals of career education. The school counselor is the one to perform these crucial roles of implementing these goals. At the secondary school level of education the school counsellor according to Olayinka (1989) should assist students in making their subject choice relevant to their vocational aspiration. If left unguided, it might lead to wrong choice of vocation. The guidance activities include: field trips, career notice board, Subject – teaching, career exhibition and Career week. Others are Use of audio-visual aids, Debates and Work experience programme.

Field Trips are the visit to a number of places of interest. These visits are well planned and the aims explained to the students and parents. Field trips provide opportunity to sample various occupations and working environments prior to occupational choice and development. There is also a programmed educational visit. Hayes and Hopson (1987) regard this as a “form of planned series of visits spread out over at least a year, during which time each student visits a representative sample of all the occupational fields theoretically open to him”.

Career Notice Board, according to Kimjika (2008), is one of the cheapest and easiest methods of disseminating career information. Every school, no matter how poor can afford to construct and erect a broad notice board at a conspicuous place where all students can have free access to it. The counselor or career officer uses the board for displaying various cuttings which contain information on prevocational, vocational (or occupational) or educational matters he/she wants to put across to the students.

The subject teacher during the teaching processes discusses the career importance of his/her subject in the world of work, emphasizing the relevance of his/her subject to several admissions into higher institution. Career Exhibition is a means of disseminating careers information among students who come from a geographical zone. Hayes and Hopson (1987) identified three main objectives.

1. To stimulate career thinking and to widen occupational horizons.
2. To focus attention on particular jobs in order to help an individual crystallize his preferences.
3. To create a situation in which parents can on the one hand, meet employers and discuss the opportunities they offer and on the other, meet the career teachers and the career officer with whom they can exchange views.

Career exhibition can be organized by a school or a group of schools within a zone. The exhibition normally involves many students and employers of labour.

Career Week is a weeklong series of career programme activities aimed at exposing students to quit reasonable areas of career education. The counselor solicits financial support from parents and other organizations. The career counsellor gathers career information in the students' interest areas. Careers week programmes cannot be effectively handled alone by the school counselor, he/she selects among interested staff, parents and students to constitute a committee. The Use of Audio-visual Aids involves the use of films/video, television, radio/cassette. A number of other techniques of disseminating career information can be reduced to a classroom process. These means of communication can be used to show case previously recorded career information.

Debate is a participatory programme whereby students go out on their own to search for the information both for and against the topic of debate. The purpose of the debate is not to judge any group a loser or winner but to highlight the two sides of the chosen topics, which must be directly related to educational or occupational matters (Kemjika, 2008). When occupational visits are organized to last either one day, long vacation programme at the work place it gives actual work experience to the students.

Students are the major benefactor of the career guidance programme. The programme assists students gain awareness of various occupations in their immediate environment, providing necessary information that expose students to vocational knowledge, preference and choice. These functions are inevitable in students' career choice. When career counselling activities are going on, most students loiter around the school environment complaining that the activities are too boring. It is on this premise that students' perception of career counselling activities are investigated in selected secondary schools in Uvwie metropolis. This study is aimed at finding the students' perception of career counselling activities in Uvwie metropolis, whether they are effective and if students' school location affects the perception of career counselling activities. In the light of this, the basic research questions are:

1. How do students perceive career counselling programmes in the schools?
2. Is there any significant difference in the perception of students of the effectiveness of career seminar and field trips?
3. Is there any significant difference in the urban and rural students' perception of career guidance programme?

The following hypotheses were tested in this study.

1. There is no significant difference in the perception of students of the effectiveness of career seminars and field trips among secondary school students.
2. There is no significant difference in the urban and rural students' perception of career counselling programme.

METHOD

Descriptive research survey design was adopted in carrying out the study. The population consists all secondary school students in Uvwie Local Government Area of Delta State. Five secondary schools were randomly selected for the study. In each of the selected schools, 40 students were selected for the study. A total of two hundred students participated in the study. A self constructed questionnaire, titled Student's Perception of Career Guidance Programme Questionnaire, was used to collect information for the study. The items in the questionnaire elicited information on the students' perception of career guidance programme in secondary schools. The instrument was validated by showing it to experts in the Department of Guidance and Counselling, Delta State University who certified its validity. The reliability was established by a test re-test method of reliability with a correlation co-efficient of 0.63. The subjects were asked to indicate if they strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree to each item in a four point Likert scale. These were scored 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The study utilized the t-test for data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result on table 1 shows that there is no significant difference in the perception of students' in the effectiveness of career seminars and field trips among secondary school students. This is because the calculated t-value 0.01 is less than the table or critical value of 1.960 at 0.05 percent. The null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the perception of students' in the effectiveness of Career Seminars and field trips among secondary school students is therefore accepted. The result on table 2 indicates that there is significant difference between the perception of career counselling programmes among urban and rural students. This is because the calculated t-value 1.966 is greater than the critical or table value of 1.960 at 0.05 percent. The null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the urban and rural students' perception of career counselling programmes is therefore rejected.

The study found that students perceived both field trips and career seminars effective for creating career awareness and information among secondary school students in the metropolis of the study. The findings from the study indicated that there is no significant difference between field trips and career seminars as effective career programmes for creating career education. The possible explanation of this is that field trips and career seminars pass onto students' career information to enable them make self fulfilling decisions. During both programmes, professionals ask and answer questions posed by the students. Sometime, career seminar could be boring when the seminar programmes are not spiced up with other activities that can make them lively.

On the second hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between urban and rural career counselling activities in secondary schools, the findings of the study show that there is significant difference between the rural and urban students perception. Supporting these findings, Okubanjo (2001) states that location of school has been shown to affect the awareness pattern of adolescents. This is hinged on the fact that most schools in the rural areas rarely organize education programmes for students.

Table 1: T-test Summary for perception of students of the effectiveness of career seminars and field trips

	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-crit	P
Field Trips	100	36.85	6.21	198	0.01	1.96	0.05
Career Services	100	36.83	6.01				

Source: Survey, 2013

Table 2: t-test summary for location

	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-crit	P
Urban	100	38	5.21	198	1.966	1.960	.05
Rural	100	35.7	6.78				

Source: Survey, 2013

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examines the students' perception of career counselling activities in Uvwie metropolis, whether they are effective and if students' school location affects the perception of career counselling activities. From the findings of this study, it is concluded that field trips and career seminars are effective programmes for implementing career education in Uvwie metropolis. Schools located in urban areas carry out career education more than the schools located in the rural areas.

Government should provide funds for the effective implementations of career counselling activities. Teachers should relate their subjects' areas to relevant careers. Counsellors should be creative in carrying out career programmes by spicing them up (bringing drama presentations and rendition of songs, dances and a comedian who could be one of the students). Counsellors should be provided with office accommodation necessary for the performance of their duties.

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