

Career Guidance Services in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Kano, Nigeria

Isa Ado Abubakar

iaabubakar.edu@buk.edu.ng

Department of Education, Bayero University Kano, Nigeria

Received: 28 July 2019

Accepted: 22 November 2019

Date of online publication: 18 December 2019

Published: 26 December 2019

ABSTRACT

The study examines career guidance services provided by school counsellors in secondary schools in Kano state. The study used 387 sample respondents drawn through purposive sampling from randomly selected schools. Questionnaire instrument with satisfactory psychometric properties was employed in data collection process. The results show that school counsellors assist students to identify their strength, abilities and learning style, help students to make appropriate career pathway selection, set educational and career goals, search for information about careers and work choices. However, school counsellors underperform in helping students to make future educational planning, college selection and placement. Moreover, no significant difference was found among gender excepts in educational Planning, college selection and placement with female students having better educational planning, college selection and placement. It is concluded that the school counsellors play greatly in the area of career decision making, goal setting and personal awareness. However, it is recommended that school counsellors should improve services involving future educational planning, college selection and placement.

KEYWORDS: *Counselling, School Counselling, Counsellors, Career Counselling, Career Planning*

INTRODUCTION

Counselling is one of the essential services for students in school. It is a professional service that focuses on the 'human' touch. As a professional service, counselling consists of a wide selection of services and activities to help people prevent adversities, focus on their overall development and remedy existing concerns (Schmidt, 1993). The American School Counsellors Association (ASCA, 1997) defined school counselling as a process of helping people by assisting them in making decisions and changing behavior. The rationale of school counselling programme is to provide a range of services that facilitates the development of all students. On that basis, Meeks (1968) concluded that 'if the purpose of counselling is to facilitate development, then the counselling process must be a part of educational process from kindergarten through the secondary school'.

Paisley and Borders (1995) uphold that the focus of school counselling is the adoption of life adjustment approaches into one's self system to foster productive rather than self-defeating behavior. Therefore, school counselling is proactive and preventive in focus, and integral to the educational programme. It assists students to gain life-long skills during their scholarship and careers, and to develop self-awareness and interpersonal communication skills. Hence, Vanzandt and Hayslip (2001) sustain that the objective of comprehensive school counselling programme is to provide students with life success skills. Schmidt (2008) concludes that preventive and developmental services have the potential to enhance the lives of students in schools.

Professionally trained personnel who manage counselling in schools are generally referred to as school 'counsellors' and operate within the educational, career and personal/social spheres to help students achieve overall development. School counsellors are an integral part of the education programme and are as important to the school as teachers and administrators. They are essential for the schools' academic success (Sciarra, 2004). In other words, the school counsellor is a change agent whose goal is to facilitate change, growth, healing and empowerment amongst students. Studer (2005) asserts that no professional is more vital to the lives of students than the professional school counsellor as they are able to facilitate growth, advocate for students, assist parents or guardians, coordinate opportunities for education in the school and consult with other community professionals for creating a meaningful educational experience for students.

In the light of the professional roles of school counsellors, the paper will examine counselling service delivery in Kano, Nigeria and to determine whether the service delivery differs among counsellors in boys' and girls' schools. The study is limited to some fundamental career issues, e.g. students' career development particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. These dimensions include selection of career pathways into science, commerce or arts during transition from lower to upper basic secondary; self-awareness (strength, abilities and learning styles); goal setting, career planning and career information search. The study is timely as it provides inputs for continuous improvement in school counselling.

Career Counselling in school

School counsellors carry out their functions in two main directions. School counsellors assist students in career development process in which variety of activities are accomplished and engage in career counselling that involves one to one process. The *first* focuses on the development of the workforce and job search that is reinforced by resources (computer technology) and labour market information. The emphasis is on the economic and placement function. The *second* philosophy centres on the career and development with emphasis on growth and development of whole human person for work and other roles within the life span. This approach can be seen as the totality of work and life roles that an individual takes on in life through which the individual expresses him or herself. Zunker (1997) viewed career development as the interaction of psychological, sociological, economic, and physical as well as chance factor that shape the sequences of jobs, occupations or career that a person may engage in throughout a lifetime.

On the other hand, career counselling is one-to-one process that focuses on what a person can do what person like to do and what the person is willing to do (Studer, 2005). However, career counselling facilitates the learning for skills, interests, believe, values, work habits and personal qualities that client to create a satisfying life within a constantly changing work environment (Krumboltz, 1996).

METHODS

Sample

The participants of the study were 387 (male 186, female 201) students of secondary school across senior secondary 1-3 drawn from the selected 21 secondary schools that were randomly within the 3 education zones in Kano metropolis which covers six local government areas. The participant ages ranged from 14 – 25 years with mean age of 17.73 years (SD = 1.75). However, participants cut across the three career pathways consisting of science, commercial and arts being offered at school level.

Procedure

The respondents were selected from senior classes in each of the secondary schools selected that comprises of both for boys and girls. Permission was granted prior to the study and in each of the school, the principal had been provided with copy of the approval letter from the board and they assigned assistant to the researcher for successful data collection. Purposive sampling was employed in the selection and at each school the filled the questionnaire at a time. The respondents have been informed about the objective of study and participation was voluntary. Means and Standard deviations were used in

Instruments

Self developed questionnaire was used in the study and it compose of 15 items designed in form of 5-Likert scale ranging from '1' as strongly disagree to '5' as strongly agree. The internal consistency (reliability) of the instrument was found to be .75. The instrument covers various dimensions of career counselling related functions of school counsellors but for purpose of this paper, items of career guidance dimensions were extracted and analyzed.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the results for the specified career guidance tasks perform by the school counselors. The result concerning the task of counsellors in assisting students to select appropriate career path ways shows that majority of the students 178 (46%) believe that school counsellors discharge the function; 126 (32.5%) believe that counsellors do not meet their expectation while 83 (21.4%) remain neutral without indicating either agree or disagree. The overall mean 3.18 (SD =1.40) compliment the finding and indicates that school counsellors fulfill the function of assisting students in selecting appropriate career path ways (m=3.18; SD =1.40). This entails that school counselors are playing active role in placement exercise in order to ensure students take appropriate career path ways respectively base on their personality and the implication is that productive students would be realized as matching has been affected between individual personality and that of the environment as put forward by Parson (1908) and Holland (1992).

Besides that, regarding the counsellor's role in assisting students to get self-awareness about strength, abilities and learning styles, majority 245 (63.3%) of the students agreed that counsellors really help in these aspects; 92 (23.8%) disagree with that while 50 or 12.9% remain at the centre. The overall result reports a mean of 3.57 (SD= 1.38), demonstrating that the school counsellors carry out the task of helping students in identifying strength, abilities and learning styles which are essential ingredients in school life. The result demonstrates that students get substantial level of awareness of their respective potentials and the implication is that they are capable of making informed and rational decision about their educational and future career endeavours.

Similarly, in the area of goal setting, majority of the respondents 187 (47.1%) agreed that school counsellors discharge their role involving goal selection thereby assisting students identify their career goals that compliments values, interests, and skills; 141 (36.4%) do not agree with that while 63 (16.3%) did not indicate their stand. The overall mean 3.14 (SD =1.34) support the finding that school counsellors discharge the function of assisting students in goal selection that are consistent with interest, skills and values portraying students are being assisted to set goals that are attainable taking into consideration variety of other factors within the limit of the students.

However, in terms of career planning, majority of the respondents 200 (51.7%) do not agree that school counsellors play their role of assisting students for future educational planning, college selection and placement; 133 (34.4%) agree with that while 54 (14%) neither agree nor disagree. The overall mean 2.67 (SD =1.39) support the finding that schools' counsellors do not execute their role adequately involving assisting students in career planning that entails tasks of preparing students for the job market and job application process in one's field of interest. The result expresses that school counsellors fail to meet up to expectations in the area of assisting students to prepare for further education and job market which are among the cardinal objectives of secondary education. The implication of the deficiency is that there would be continuous production of students without the requirements and skills necessary for further education and employment.

Finally, as regards to the counsellors' role in assisting students with career information search about careers and the world of work, majority of the respondents 196 (50.7%) agreed that counsellors perform this function, 133 (34.4%) do not agree with that while 58 (15%) remain neutral. The overall mean 3.29 (SD =1.43) support the finding that counsellors perform the function of assisting students in career information search about careers and world of work (providing that school counsellors use career information resources at disposal to help student get information which form the background for any meaningful decision. Therefore, the implication is that students would be acquainted with adequate information as well as existing alternative careers within respective career clusters.

Table 1
Frequency Distribution, Mean and SD for Career Guidance Services

		SD	N	A	Mean	SD
1	My School Counsellor helps in selecting appropriate career path	12 (33%)	83 (21%)	178 (46%)	3.18	1.40
2	My School Counsellor helps students to learn about strength, abilities and learning styles	92 (24%)	50 (13%)	245 (63%)	3.57	1.38
3	My School Counsellor helps students think about goals after graduation from high school	141 (36%)	63 (16%)	183 (47%)	3.14	1.43
4	My School Counsellor helps students regarding future educational Planning, college selection and placement (career planning)	200 (52%)	54 (14%)	133 (34%)	2.67	1.39
5	My School Counsellor helps in information search about Careers and the world of work	133 (34%)	58 (15%)	196 (51%)	3.29	1.43

Table 2 shows an independent t-test for the services available between male and female students. The results depict that a significant difference was found among gender in educational Planning, college selection and placement $t(385) = 2.27, p < .05$ indicating that counsellors in girls schools perform better in assisting female students in educational planning, college selection and placement than counsellors in male schools ($m = 2.82$ and 2.50 ; $SD = 1.42$ and 1.33). However, no significant difference was found among gender in the selection of appropriate career path $t(385) = -1.46, p > .05$, goal setting $t(385) = -1.23, p > .05$, self awareness $t(385) = -.60, p > .05$ and career information search $t(385) = -.55, p > .05$ revealing that school counsellors functions is similar in both girls and boys school.

Table 2
Mean, Standard Deviation, t-Values for Counselling services delivery differences among gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
My School Counsellor has helped me in selecting appropriate career paths	Male	186	3.0591	1.41106	-1.646	.101
	Female	201	3.2935	1.38867		
My School Counsellor has helps students think about goals after graduation from high school.	Male	186	3.0538	1.45836	-1.236	.217
	Female	201	3.2338	1.40714		
My School Counsellor helps students regarding educational Planning, college selection and placement.	Male	186	2.5054	1.33253	2.276	.023
	Female	201	2.8259	1.42987		
My School Counsellor has helps students to learn about strength, abilities and learning styles	Male	186	3.5269	1.48208	-.604	.546
	Female	201	3.6119	1.28789		
My School Counsellor helps in information search about Careers and the world of work.	Male	186	3.2527	1.44657	-.551	.582
	Female	201	3.3333	1.42945		

DISCUSSIONS

The research exposed the degree to which fundamental career aspects are being provided in schools. This reveals that counsellors' task performance in selection of appropriate career path ways among students account for 46 percent which below the average indicating that the school counsellors' role is not adequate enough for effective placement during the transition from lower to upper basic secondary school. This suggests that school counsellor need to improve the approach being used and employ modern ways of assessing and placing student into appropriate career pathways for greater efficiency and productivity of students.

Similarly, self-awareness involving strength, abilities and learning styles emerged as best function that school counsellors perform. This indicates that the criteria used by the school counsellors is effective and improving the technique will in no doubt improve the outcome which could be for the best of the students, system and society as whole as students will future educational and career prospects will be produced. Thus, collaboration between school counsellor and teachers as well as other stakeholders should be enhanced thereby making these students actualize their career and educational goals.

Meanwhile, goal selection is also satisfactory indicating that students' capability of setting goals that compliment interest, skills and values is adequate. This further reveal that students set goals that are attainable thereby increasing the tendency of success. This justify that schools' counsellors perform the career guidance service in helping students set attainable goals towards a specific direction as it is the only way in which students could be utilized optimally for societal growth in particular, national and global advancement in broader perspective.

In the area of career planning, the outcome indicates that school counsellors under perform in this area. Career planning involves strategy for making the students aware of what is contain and required in the career of one's choice that match interest and abilities. The relevance of career planning in school cannot be under estimated as its cardinal objectives is to provide students with necessary awareness, knowledge and skills require in the world of work. Herr, Cramer and Niles (2004) asserts that career planning helps students acquire knowledge, skills and awareness necessary for effectively managing their career development, thus, counsellor implement systematic and well- coordinated educational and career planning programme. Therefore, the outcome suggests that career planning in secondary need to be revisited so as to make it functional with a view to achieving high level of awareness, improve knowledge acquisition and skills as ingredient for effective career development.

Finally, the finding involving career information search dimension demonstrates that counsellors perform this function satisfactorily. The finding suggests that counsellors paid attention career guidance service due to its crucial importance so that students would have enough information to informed decision making and during translation of goals into action. Career information search is an integral part in career development process that need to be given attention during the school days so that students can be prepared adequately for development task of exploration.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study pointed out the degree to which school counsellors perform career guidance services in schools. The outcome provides the ground for improving the performance of the school counsellors so that school can meet up to its expectation of preparing students that are well equipped for life in the competitive 21st century. Therefore, base on the state of tasks delivery, it is recommended that stakeholder should review the process of handling school counselling and school counsellors should under professional training so that they could be able to carry out their duties professionally for better results. Similarly, the school counselling should be designed to meet existing need of students, educational system and labour market so linkage could be established. Needs assessment should be carried out as it forms the basis for which the programmes can be established. One important component at initial stage of conducting a need assessment is to determine rationale, goals and interventions (Herr & Crammer, 1996)

REFERENCES

- Campbell, S & Dahir, C. A. (1997) Sharing the vision: The national standard for school counselling programme, Alexandria VA: *American School Counsellor Association*. In *Bradley T. Erford: Transforming school counselling profession* (2007) 2nd edition, Pearson Education
- Holland, J. L. (1992). *Making vocational choices (2nd ed.)*. Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc.
- J. J. Schmidt (2008), *Counselling in Schools: Comprehensive Program of Responsive Service for All Students*, Fifth Edition, Pearson Education, Inc. Canada.
- J. J. Schmidt, (1993), *Essential services and Comprehensive Program*. Allyn and Bacon, a Division of Simon and Schuster, Inc, 160, MA.
- Krumboltz, J.D (1996) A learning theory of counselling. In *the professional school counsellor: An Advocate for students* (2005), p 169-170, Brooks & Cole.
- Meeks, A. R. (1968) *Guidance in Elementary Education*, Ronald Press co, New York.
- Paisley, P.O. & Borders, L. D. (1995) School counselling: An evolving specialty. *Journal of counselling and development*.
- Sciarra, D.T. (2004), *School counselling: Foundation and Contemporary Issues*. Canada: Brooks/Cole, a Division of Thomson Learning, Inc.
- Studer, J. R. (2005). *The professional school counsellor: An Advocate for Students*. USA: Brooks/Cole, division of Thomson Learning, Inc.

Zark Vanzandt & Jo Hayslip (2001) *Developing your School Counselling Program: A handbook for systematic planning*. Wads worth/ Thompson Learning, CA, USA.

Zunker, V.G. (1997) *Career counselling: Allied concepts of life planning*, Pacific Groove, CA: Brooks/ Cole.