



Effect of counseling services on career choice of secondary school students in Anambra state, Nigeria

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Abstract

Many students have made wrong choices in their quest to making a career choice because they failed in making the right choice of counselling administrator. This study examined how counselling services affected the career decisions made by secondary school students in the state of Anambra. The specific aim at evaluating the effect of counselling orientation, appraisal, and follow-up services. The study adopted descriptive survey research design to examine the effect of counselling services on career choice of students in Anambra State. Multiple regression analysis (MRA) was used to test the hypothesis. There are an infinite number of educators and guidance counsellors in the population. Two hundred sixty-seven teachers and school counsellors were selected as the sample size. A questionnaire was used as the tool for data extraction. Data from a four-Likert scale were shown and analysed. The study found that career counselling services affect secondary school students' choices in Anambra. The results led to the conclusion that students in senior secondary schools can make wise career decisions with proper counselling services. The study recommended that directing students towards their areas of strength rather than choosing a career path that is unsuitable for them or that of their peers, can help the students with career decisions. Again, hiring counsellors with formal training and regular meetings between these counsellors and students to discuss issues that affect students' academic performance should also be a priority for school administrators.

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1. Introduction

The centre of knowledge acquisition is secondary school education. Students are exposed to various subjects during this time, allowing them to decide which field of study they want to pursue in their higher education (Melvin, 2019). After primary school but before higher education, secondary school is the next level of education. Another sign of its importance is where it is in the educational system. In the opinion of Schwarzeller (2012), schools provide equal opportunities for the development of talents and skills and an outside viewpoint on what needs to be done to bring about change. In Nigeria, secondary schools are consistently the central area of emphasis for educational reform. Young boys and girls must develop their knowledge, abilities, experiences, and career options (Ezekwesil, 2016). This system aims to enhance secondary school instruction and equip students with more valuable skills to support themselves after graduation. According to Ogidi (2017), individuals differ from one another; these impacts who people are and what they are capable of. Sometimes a person's actions don't match their skills, abilities, and interests. How quickly students assess their career preferences depends on their growth rates, intelligence quotient (IQ) levels, academic achievements, and sexual orientation. The student's home, school, mosque, church, and community are critical environmental factors influencing their career choice or aspirations. Other factors, including parental expectations, high salaries, social standing, personal security,

friendships, career advancement opportunities, and the nature of the work itself, have directly or indirectly influenced students about to graduate from high school to make unrealistic career decisions.

In counselling, the word "career" has a broad and technical meaning. In a technical sense, it denotes the hierarchy of a position or role that combines work, leisure, and academic pursuits. Throughout one's working life, it may take the form of various jobs, vocations, or occupations (Seligman, Weiss, Weinraub, & Schulman, 1980). This paper sees a career as a job that a person can advance in during their working life to receive more responsibility and money. A career is a person's entire body of work throughout their lifetime that has developed into their primary source of income (Tamborini, Kim, & Sakamoto, 2015). Before now, picking a career wasn't as tricky. Although there were fewer employment opportunities, it was more crucial that parents, teachers, and religious organisations were aware of them and the requirements for applying. Counselling was introduced to assist secondary students in making career decisions because students in secondary schools today hardly fully comprehend the qualifications required for each job and cannot keep up with the abundance of career opportunities.

A troubled person's shaping, reconstruction, and rehabilitation are the main goals of the counselling profession. It acts as a relationship for maladaptive behaviour that is both therapeutic and preventative. It is widely accepted that counselling services are available to everyone, including those who are normal and abnormal, struggling with problems or not. However, it was only after realising the need for a more sophisticated and comprehensive package to help people deal with the issues and concerns of modern life that modern counselling was introduced in secondary schools in Nigeria. On the other hand, counselling, according to Makinde (2017), is a service meant to assist a person in evaluating their capabilities, accomplishments, and preferred method of adjusting to a new decision. Okon (2014) defined counselling as a comprehensive programme of highly specialised activities by specialists to support people in making wise and informed decisions. Since providing counselling services is a profession, effective counselling consequently necessitates the application of fundamental helping principles. The notions of comprehension, sequential process, appreciating self-disclosure, and ethical behaviour are included among these, though. Their interventions improve counselling's efficacy and fortify the therapeutic alliance's specialist.

When choosing their careers, students face a variety of challenges. This study claims that some secondary school students are not receiving adequate guidance because there are not enough guidance and counselling services available, these services are not encouraged, and even where they are available, there are not enough qualified counsellors. Furthermore, insufficient information is available to teach students about their career options. A student's career choices are influenced by personal-social, educational background, and physical and economic factors, according to a number of authors, including (Mutie & Kochar, 2017; Ogidi, 2017). According to reports, few administrators and educators are worried but still fail to recognise the crucial function of licensed professional counsellors in secondary schools. It can be difficult for students to make a wise career decision. The majority of schools in Nigeria don't offer enough variety in their curricula to cater to all of the students' career preferences. Because their schools don't provide counselling services or because of the conditions, the majority of secondary school students in Anambra are left unguided. As a result, because no career counsellor is available to them until they have completed their education, students are more likely to make bad decisions about their careers or none.

This study will also examine career choices and counselling services for students at these levels because these choices significantly impact students' academic performance, futures, and, indirectly, the entire society. The inability of secondary school students to develop realistic career plans is a serious problem. This study examines how Anambra State career counselling services influence secondary school students' decisions. The effects of counselling services on students' career decisions in the state of Anambra are specifically examined in this paper. The study focused on the counselling services' orientation, appraisal, and follow-up components.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Counselling Service

According to Makinde (2017), a counselling service is intended to assist a person in analysing himself in light of any gaps in his abilities, accomplishments, interests, or modes of adjusting to a new course of action. According to Agi (2014), counselling is a technique for assisting the individual in using their psychological resources by emphasising that person's positive development strengths and the specific personality traits, behaviours, and emotional resources that can be used.

2.2. Types Counseling Service

In this study by Olayinka (2016), two significant forms of counselling were identified: individual counselling (face-to-face interaction between the professional counsellor and the client) and group counselling (this between the professional counsellor and clients who have similar concerns). There are also the following counselling programmes and services available in schools:

2.2.1. Orientation Services

Orientation services help students adjust to the academic environment more quickly. According to Makinde (2017), freshmen secondary school students who are accepted for a new academic year go through social and psychological culture shock. They no longer receive psychological support from their parents, friends, or former teachers, which is why this is the case. Additionally, it appears that the new environment has entirely new administrative structures and rules. Students who need assistance adjusting can take advantage of orientation services. Their familiarisation with the academic environment is the goal of a great counselling programme (Adeniyi & Vipene, 2022).

2.2.2. Appraisal Services

In order to provide appraisal services, a teacher counsellor must gather, examine, and use a variety of objective data that can help to better understand the student. Without complete and accurate student data, a teacher counsellor will find it challenging to help them (Makinde, 2017; Wokili, 2018). As a result, it is crucial to gather and make available a variety of information via observation, interview, testing, history, and social adjustment data about each student in order for educators to be in a position to plan fulfilling educational, vocational, and social programmes.

2.2.3. Follow-Up Services

When secondary schooling ends and students must choose what to do afterwards, follow-up services are crucial. These services support students in making decisions about appropriate career paths and the subject combinations needed for particular courses. According to Makinde (2017), placement services are created to help a person choose and take advantage of opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom and on the job market. Follow-up services are required to follow or locate a student after school and at work. School counsellors create a systematic strategy for staying in touch with former students. According to Makinde (2017), the school maintains the follow-up data and uses it to assess the counselling program's efficacy.

2.3. Career Choice

The decision of what one wants to do for a living is referred to by experts when talking about career choice (Iyoke, 2019). A career decision is selecting a field of study that necessitates specific knowledge and skills acquired through a particular educational programme and results in a certificate or degree attesting to your success (Okirigwe, 2020). Finding a fulfilling career and not just a job is crucial because the average person spends 45 to 50 years working. As a result, choosing a profession has grown more complex. One must carefully consider their options and conduct extensive research before staying current with changing social and economic conditions (Makinde, 2017). However, most secondary school students lack the accurate information necessary to make wise career decisions about the range of employment opportunities available. The factors that affect a person's decision about their career include their personality, interests, self-concept, cultural identity, globalisation, socialisation, role models, social support, and the resources they have access to, such as information and money, according to Iyoke (2019). According to Kurebwa, Matyatini, and Wadesango (2016), each person engaging in the process is impacted by various factors, including their environment, skills, social connections, and level of education. Therefore, this study defines career choice as the selection of a vocation, usually on the basis of such factors as parental guidance, vocational guidance, identification with admired figures, trial or part-time jobs, training opportunities, personal interests, and ability tests.

3. Methodology

The study was conducted using a descriptive survey design. The study was conducted in Onitsha, Anambra State. One of biggest cities and is located in the geopolitical South-East. Anambra State has a controlled land area of 4416 square kilometres.

Kogi State is on its northern border, Delta State is on its western border, Imo State is on its southern border, and Enugu State is on its eastern border. Anambra North, Central, and South Senatorial Zones are established within it. Six of the 21 local government areas—Aguata, Awka, Nnewi, Ogidi, Otuocha, and Onitsha—are designated as education zones. The educational zone under investigation is Onitsha.

Teachers and school counsellors from the state of Anambra's public and private secondary schools comprise the study's population. Because there are an infinite number of people in the population, the researcher used purposive sampling to select a sample size of 367 teachers and school counsellors. An organised questionnaire is the primary research tool. A questionnaire was created, reviewed by industry professionals, and then given to the respondents.

Face and content validity were both used in this study by the researcher. The instrument was initially distributed for validation to two academics. The final version of the questionnaire took into account their modifications and suggestions. The test-retest method was also employed simultaneously to evaluate the reliability of the questionnaires used to gather the data. Multiple regression analysis (MRA) was used to examine how the career choices of secondary school students in Onitsha, Anambra state, were impacted by counselling services. The regression model is represented as follows:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_nX_n + \epsilon$$

Where:

- Y = Career choice (CC).
- α = Constant term.
- β = Beta coefficients.
- X₁= Orientation service (OS).
- X₂= Appraisal service (AS).
- X₃= Follow-up service (FS).
- ϵ = Error term.

4. Analysis of Results

Two hundred and seventy (267) teachers and school counsellors received copies of the questionnaire, of which two hundred and twenty-six (226) were correctly filled out and returned. This results in a return rate of 83.7%. To determine the level of normality, a preliminary analysis using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and Pearson's correlation coefficient was conducted. Multiple regression was used concurrently to examine the influence of independent variables on the dependent variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to analyse the relationship between the critical components of counselling services and students' career decisions in the Anambra state. The correlation coefficient thus illustrated this relationship test in Table 1.

Table 1. Pearson's correlation between counselling services components and students' career choice.

		Counselling services	Students' career choice
Counselling services	Pearson's correlation	1	0.548**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.001
	N	226	226
Students' career choice	Pearson's correlation	0.548**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.001
	N	226	226

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation coefficient between counselling services elements and students' career choices is shown in Table 1 ($r = 0.548, p < 0.05$). The table of correlation coefficients demonstrates that the dependent variable (students' career choice) and counselling services components have a positive and significant relationship. The correlation coefficient is 0.548, which equals 54.8%, and the p-value is less than 0.05. With this significance level, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a significant and positive correlation between students' career choice and counselling services (orientation service, appraisal service and follow-up). Notably, the significance, strength, and positivity of the relationship between the two variables are all reflected. The factor loading of each counselling services component was measured using the test, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) analysis, and other tests are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Exploratory factor analysis of the measurement of counselling services components.

Item	Mean	SD	Factor loading	Item total correlation
Counselling service components				
Orientation service	2.73	2.321	0.752	0.635
Appraisal service	1.62	1.692	0.644	0.613
Follow-up	1.19	1.446	0.652	0.575

Each measurement level used in the research construct was subjected to reliability analysis to determine its internal consistency level. Using Statistics Package for Social Science (SPSS), version 27, the internal consistency of the counselling services measurements constituted parts, and the items that resulted from it were examined separately. Orientation service (0.668), appraisal service (0.601), and follow-up (0.652) all have high Cronbach's alpha coefficients. An internal consistency of 0.711 was generated for students' career choices. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were above 0.600, so no factor was excluded from the measurement model. This paper examined the counselling services components based on the EFA results using the multiple regression analysis/model measurement shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of the regression result of counselling services and students' career choice.

R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate	Change statistics					Durbin-Watson
				R square change	F change	df1	df2	Sig. F change	
0.286 ^a	0.623	0.572	3.261	0.613	5.351	4	222	0.000	1.636

Note: a. Predictors: (Constant), orientation, appraisal, follow-up.
Dependent variable: students' CC.

Table 3 reveals that R^2 which measures the strength of the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, have a value of 0.613. This outcome was supported by an adjusted R^2 of 0.572. This suggests that 57.2% of the variation in students' career decisions can be predicted by counselling service variables like orientation, appraisal, and follow-up variations. This is significant at 0.05, indicating a significant correlation between the independent variables of the counselling service and the dependent variable of the students' career choice. A significant F-change, according to the change statistics, indicates that the variables added in that step significantly improved the prediction. The use of Durbin-Watson statistics was done to look for autocorrelation. The model's variables are not autocorrelated, as shown by the Durbin-Watson statistics of 1.636 in Table 4, indicating that the model is reliable for making predictions.

Table 4. Analysis of variance.

Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	325.311	4	61.410	5.351	0.001 ^b
Residual	3521.421	222	11.152	---	---
Total	3846.732	226	---	---	---

Note: Dependent variable: students' CC.
b. Predictors: (Constant), orientation, appraisal, follow-up.

The F-statistics value of 5.351 in Table 5 with a sig-value (P-value) of 0.001 revealed that the independent variable significantly affects the dependent. This shows that orientation, appraisal, and follow-up can collectively explain the variations in students' career choices in Anambra State.

Table 5. Multiple regression analysis.

Model	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
(Constant)	12.246	1.523	---	7.932	0.000
Orientation service	0.093	0.056	0.193	1.453	0.000
Appraisal service	0.145	0.082	0.202	2.371	0.001
Follow-up	0.086	0.097	0.210	2.789	0.002

Note: Dependent variable: Students' CC.

Table 5 of the regression model exhibits the level of contribution counselling service variables made to students' career choice in the Anambra State of Nigeria. The result shows that counselling service is significant at $p < 0.05$. The result depicts that counselling service significantly affects students' career choice. Notably, the standardised Beta and the corresponding P-values for the orientation services ($\beta = 0.193$, $p < 0.000$), follow-up ($\beta = 0.210$, $p < 0.002$), and appraisal service ($\beta = 0.202$, $p < 0.001$). Confirmed that orientation services contribute most significantly to the model, followed by follow-up and appraisal services.

5. Discussion of Results

The constructs for counselling services are presented in this study. The orientation, appraisal, and follow-up services were identified as the contributory constructs of counselling services regarding students' career choices in Anambra State using multiple regression analysis. The study examined how counselling services impacted career choices among students in Anambra State. The results demonstrate how counselling services significantly affect students' career decisions in Anambra State. This supports numerous academics' findings that counselling services significantly impact students' career decisions (Iyoke, 2019; Okirigwe, 2020) in public secondary schools in Enugu North Local Government Area.

Furthermore, it is clear that individual counselling services like orientation, appraisal, and follow-up services greatly impacted students' career decisions. At the secondary school level, orientation services significantly affect students' career choices more than follow-up and appraisal services. This result supports Iyoke (2019) contention that orientation services are offered to assist students in better adjusting to the school environment and that assessment services improve an understanding of the students. That follow-up of students' activities is necessary because the outcome may result in service adjustment or improvement if outright failure or unsatisfactory success has been detected.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has shown that proper counselling services make students' career decisions in senior secondary schools practical. Counselling aids students in making career decisions so they can compete for the right field in which they excel rather than imitating their peers and choosing the incorrect career field. Additionally, school administrators should see that counsellors with professional training are hired and that these counsellors meet with students regularly to discuss issues that impact their academic performance. Based on the study's findings, the following suggestions are made:

1. More counselling centres should be established in schools, along with more licenced counsellors.

2. Students should be encouraged to discuss career options with their guidance counsellors and be aware of how certain subjects relate to particular careers.

3. The counsellor should be required to attend professional conferences to learn about cutting-edge client therapies.

4. The Ministry of Education should mandate that counselling centres be established in public and private secondary schools and that counselling initiatives be carried out. Government should provide and make funds available for all counselling services to support counselling practically.

7. Suggestions for Further Study

More studies should be conducted to investigate further the effect of counselling services on the career choice of secondary school students in other parts of the South-Eastern States. The study should be carried out in another Educational Zones in Anambra State to compare the findings since the study was restricted to the Onitsha Educational Zone of Anambra state.

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