

PERCIEVED INFLUENCE OF VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE ON BUSINESS STUDENTS' CAREER CHOICES IN MAREKTING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA**BY**

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Abstract

*The study examined the perceived influence of vocational guidance on business students' career choices in secondary school in Kwara State, Nigeria. One purpose was raised, one research question and one hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. One thousand seven hundred and fifty-five students in secondary schools in Kwara State made up the total population for the study. A sample of 305 (students) was drawn from the population using the research advisor sampling. The instrument used for the collection of data was a structured questionnaire titled *Influence of Vocational Guidance on Business Students Career Choices in Secondary School Students' Questionnaire (IVGBSCSSSQ)*. Percentage and mean were used to analyze the research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using independent t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The study found that vocational guidance has positive influence on business students' career choices in secondary schools. It was concluded that the need for experienced vocational guidance at our secondary schools should be taken into serious consideration, as the destiny of the students and choices of careers depends on the monitoring and guidance received. It was recommended among others that there should be the availability of experienced vocational guidance at the school, who will guide the students based on records of achievement.*

Keywords: *Vocational Guidance, Business Students, Career Choices*

Introduction

The Introduction and implementation of vocational guidance (VG) into the secondary curriculum in Nigeria has not only provided students with the necessary transferable skills that employers want in an organization but, it has also provided a mechanism for engaging those who are lost or confused on what career to choose the right path. It has also presented them with the help of a vocational guidance counselor the opportunity to investigate which future career options align with each student's ability and area of interest. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) in its National Policy on Education places a high premium on vocational education which vocational guidance is an integral part, of the view of its significant role in the socio-economic emancipation of Nigeria. The FRN (2013) showed that it is used as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of education which led to the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge. Vocational education is not only important in supplying employment opportunities to individuals but also helps in enhancing the productivity of firms. Agrawal (2013) said that vocational education is an indispensable tool for improving labor mobility, adaptability, and productivity and contributing to enhancing firms' competitiveness and redressing labor market imbalances. For underprivileged as well as marginalized groups, vocational education can be a better route toward a better life for them. It was, further, stressed that this hope of the federal government can only be true and realized only if the vocational education system is well implemented in our secondary and tertiary institutions.

Guidance is as old as man, all through the ages, humans have for one reason or the other sought guidance. Vocational guidance was developed by Frank Parsons in the year 1908, a time he was faced with the challenge of giving a name to what he thought the school should provide as a service to school leavers about to go into the world of work. According to Parsons in his book 'Choosing a Vocation', the term vocational guidance was referred to the process of assisting people to choose a vocation, prepare for it, and attain efficiency and success. The national vocational guidance association which was set up in America in (1924),

went on to state that vocational guidance is regarded as choosing an occupation, preparing for it and entering into it, and progressing in it.

The origins of vocational guidance in Nigeria, however, can only be traced to antiquity. In Nigeria, the beginnings of what could be called modern vocational guidance belong to the second half of the 20th century. In Late 1959, a group of Reverend Sisters of St. Theresa's College Ibadan felt the need for their graduating students to obtain some help concerning information about work and placement in the world of work. They, therefore, invited twenty professionals from different occupations to give some occupational school in December that year, that is, 1959. The invitees arranged vocational talks for the students and helped them to gain further insight into their capabilities and interests, particularly as these abilities and interests related to the available occupational opportunities. In addition, the immediate net outcome was that the school, that is, St. Theresa's College, was able to obtain positions for fifty-four, out of the sixty girls in professional training courses and occupations. The groups of helpers were not vocational guidance counselors; however, they were able to sustain their interest in helping service the students so well started. They convened regular meetings and decided to extend their environs. In October 1961 there was a crucial meeting to which post-primary school principals and representatives from the ministries of Education, Labor, Trade and Industry, and Health were invited; an important outcome was the establishment of the Ibadan Careers Council. Soon after the founding in 1961 of the Ibadan Careers Council, many more schools all over Nigeria joined the Association thus increasing its membership tremendously. It became naturally necessary to change the name of the Association to accommodate its national outlook. Thus in 1967, the Ibadan Careers Council has renamed the Nigerian Careers Council. The Nigerian Careers Council drew its membership mainly from post-primary schools and membership was also open to secondary schools and institutions of higher education, employers, Government Ministries, and others interested in the Association's activities. By 1972 the number of members stood at 158. The Association's aims and objectives as outlined in an undated information bulletin entitled Nigerian Careers Council include but are not limited to: The council's main ambition is to establish and maintain a sound vocational Guidance Service in our secondary schools whereby school-leavers' educational ambition could be properly channeled to suit their ability and aptitude in their choice of careers (Ikeotuonye, 1990).

In pursuance of the objective of the 6-3-3-4 educational system particularly concerning the young secondary school leavers encountering fewer difficulties in making the necessary transition from school to work, the National Policy on Education further stated that "given the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects, and because of personality maladjustment among young school children, career officers and counselors shall be appointed in primary institutions (FGN 2013)". The above pronouncement stresses that vocational guidance is a must in every Nigerian secondary school to achieve the desired aims of VTE at this level. Unachukwu (2011) reported that there is no serious guidance and counseling in secondary school system, with the result that the students pass out of this level without defined objectives. This could be attributed to the scarcity of qualified career officers or vocational counselors as recognized in the National Policy on Education (FGN 2013). The level of involvement of other members of the school community in guidance activities could also hinder effective vocational guidance activities in secondary schools. There is a need for all hands to be on deck to improve guidance activities in secondary schools to turn out students who are technically equipped to fit into the global economy. With an increased change in the world of work and the number of opportunities in the society and market; the need for vocational guidance has also increased manifold. People have begun to realize the fact that not all can become engineers, doctors, lawyers, teachers, entrepreneurs, oil, and gas merchants, or travel abroad. Rather students can explore other fields that concur with their interests and abilities with the help of a vocational counselor. Vocational guidance is essential in secondary schools when the students are not sure about choosing a suitable career option or are confused about which path to take. This is very important, as students from junior secondary find it difficult to determine whether to choose science, art, or commercial. Most students are not well informed or aware of different careers aligned with their choice of the senior class, either science, art, or commercial. It is important to know that a person's career determines his course of life. While a good decision at the right point in time can make the student's life pleasant; a wrong one can as well ruin it. Vocational guidance help is

needed at that point to assist such students carefully and professionally in selecting the most suitable senior class. Vocational counseling can help students clear their doubts by giving them a clear-cut view of what they can expect from various business subjects. Despite having a clear idea of what they want to achieve in life, some students, do not know the career path they need to follow to have the requisite academic qualifications to join a particular course.

Many Nigerian youths are idle while some are involved in various vices due to the unemployment rate in the country (Ademiluyi, 2018). This implies that they cannot raise the socioeconomic standard of their dear country, nor could they contribute to nation-building. Youth unemployment is a menace and constitutes a real danger and a threat to Nigeria's socioeconomic growth. It is often said that "an idle hand is the devil's workshop" the joblessness of the Nigerian youth today stems from their of requisite skills inadequate guidance on vocational and entrepreneurial skills (Ademiluyi, 2019). This has further aggravated the youth's negative attitudes in the society as most antisocial acts including thuggery, arm robbery, militancy, restiveness, ethnic-political clashes, and other social vices in the country, which could be traced to the high rate of unemployment (Okafor, 2011). Unfortunately, most research studies on the causes of youth unemployment or the implications of unemployment have not been able to trace the root cause in detail. A career choice is not made abruptly, it is a continuous process with careful planning. A career is a series of jobs that a person has in a particular area of work, usually involving more responsibilities as time passes (Okonkwo, 2011). Career choice is one of many important choices students will make in determining their future and this decision will impact them throughout their lives. The essence of who the student is or wants to become will revolve around what the student wants to do with their lifelong work. The primary goal of career guidance and counseling is to make it possible for an individual to see and explore his or her unlimited endowed options. It is an undeniable fact that the major service areas of guidance and counseling are, educational guidance and counseling which assists students in their choices of career, vocational guidance and counseling which assists the individual to choose and prepare for an occupation that is compatible with his interests and aptitudes, and personal and social guidance and counseling which assists the individual to behave appropriately concerning other members of the society (Odeck 2009; Ipaye, 2015).

Vocational guidance and counseling services are essential tools in student development, especially during the adolescent stage. The adolescent stage is characterized by rapid growth and change: socially, spiritually, physically, morally, and intellectually. Most adolescents are in secondary schools, which is why guidance and counseling services are very essential. According to Bark (2013), guidance and counseling are the assistance made available by qualified and trained persons to an individual of any age to help him to manage his life activities, develop his points of view, make his own decisions, and carry his burden. In addition, Braddock (2011) states that the purpose of guidance and counseling in schools is to improve academic achievement, foster positive study attitudes, and habits, increase acquisition and application of conflict resolution skills, and decrease school dropouts. Lack of guidance and counseling in adolescence has resulted in to increase in unpleasant outcomes in society. These include school dropouts, drug abuse, crimes, and even failure to secure jobs. When guidance and counseling services are lacking in schools, students' adaptation becomes difficult thus leading to poor performance, misbehavior, and drop out. Career selection is one of many important choices students will make in determining their future; 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. Indeed, vocational and career-related issues are salient across different cultures and nationalities (Leung, 2013).

Gender is one of the most stable features that humans are born with it and upon which humans are classified as male and female and prejudiced. It was argued that adolescents internalize gender expectations as to what is "appropriate" male and female behavior in their gender ideology and this return affect career aspirations, academic motivation, and academic self-efficacy (Maaik, Eva, Ineke & Tanja, 2016). Despite recognition by researchers of the importance of gender in career choices, relatively little attention has been given to the secondary schools' students in this regard. There are also scanty studies that have examined the value of gender differences in career choices in developing countries and especially Nigeria, showing the necessity of

this study. Although both male and female are accorded equal educational opportunities in our modern educational system, gender seem to fortify difference in career choices (Dasgupta & Stout, 2014, Wang & Degol, 2013).

According to Alutu (2012), career development and choice should be initiated as early as the nursery school years through the primary, secondary, and tertiary school levels. Most career choice are influenced by parents, friends, relatives, teachers, printed information, etc., which has a relative effect on one's life endeavors. Career choice is one of many important decisions students will make in determining plans. This decision will impact them throughout their lives because, "the essence of who the student is will revolve around what the student wants to do with their life-long work" (Brochert, 2012, p:1). Every student carries the unique history of their past and this determines how they view the world and the career opportunities that are available to them in their chosen field of study. In most cases, the choice of careers, subjects, and courses of study as well as the subsequent career paths are a nightmare for prospective undergraduate students (Issa & Nwalo, 2018). This is because most students do not have enough knowledge and information to make the right career choice. Most often, choosing the right subject combination leading to the right professional can make the difference between enjoying and detesting the career in the future. Everyone undergoing the process of making a career choice is influenced by such factors as the context in which they live, their aptitudes, and their educational attainment (Watson et al., 2010). This study is focused on how vocational guidance influences business students' career choices in secondary schools. Business subjects that are offered to business students at the secondary school level are arithmetic, commerce, accounting, economics, marketing, and business studies. The introduction of these subjects at junior and senior secondary schools prepares the students for the desired career path. This career path can be chosen wisely and monitored with the help of vocational guidance. Business students after leaving school can now use relevant skills, knowledge, and competencies gained to work or proceed to further academic journeys in a business-related degree such as Business Education, Marketing, Business Administration, Entrepreneurship, etc. These courses prepare an individual to career opportunities in the world of work. Students can be exposed to salesmanship, branding, advertising and so on.

However, their career choices for selecting the specialization need to be based on complete information and marketplace practices. Secondary schools now need to regularly hold sessions with corporate professionals, companies, and trade bodies to create an interface with the students. The interface with the industry professional is extremely important, as it will provide the students with the opportunity to discuss and clarify their thought processes and align their perceptions about various disciplines and career options with the actual ground realities. The school should bring up the department for vocational guidance that will focus on nurturing and assisting the students towards academic and career journeys. The success of young leaders in their career endeavors depends on the alignment of their career choice with their interests and personal preferences. Choice of career is standout amongst the most noteworthy determinations for intuition, preconceived notions, wild imaginations, or popular concepts. A miss perceived career choice directs all individual efforts and resources in the wrong direction, and when not aligned with the expectations; would not only frustrate business students but will be supportive to them in their future thoughts. Numerous variables influence the career decisions of secondary school students, which vocational guidance is not exempted, recognizing these variables would give individuals, instructors, and industry a thought as to where to put their trust in the profession choice procedure (Kazi, Nimra & Nawaz, 2016).

Business students after getting their degree begin their careers in the real business world. Also, there would be business students who therefore choose what the right way is for them inside of the time compass of the first year, and afterward, there are the slow learners who take very late choices. The orientation of this choice will affect the business students' life for no less than 30 years. Individuals chose career planning to pursue their professional objectives and get informed about upcoming opportunities, their results, and their timely evaluations. People prefer a career that could provide them sound basis for an improved standard of living (Cavus, Geri, and Turgunbayeva; 2015). In Kenya, personality types and interest in the subject is a factor that impacts a lot on making career choices for the students, but a look at a similar study conducted in South

Africa, where demographics and culture are different it, revealed that the financial factors impact on career choices of students, Fatima Abrahams et al (2015). Zing's (2017) research concluded that the personal liking of an individual towards a particular subject contributes to his career selection decision. The study of Shertzer and Stone (2013) found that interest depicted by students in some subjects will mostly lead to better examination performance and selection of professions in the same direction. Alexander (2011) revealed that an examination of students enrolled in the disciplines of information technology found that liking the subject has chief significance when looking at the factors contributing to the professional direction adopted by students. Edward and Quinter's (2012) investigation disclosed that an individual's proclivity toward a particular field or subject, their predilection for a particular job, and the match between his personality and selected professions is an important factor contributing career path. All the studies discussed pointed to certain factors that could be the predicament for business students' career choices.

Okolie (2014) asserts that many secondary school students lack ideas on which course to study in the higher education institution after leaving secondary school. Also, the list of vocations appears inexhaustible, likewise, the variety of persons with varied attributes; and certainly not all persons are suitable for all vocations because every vocation needs a certain background, guidance, preparation, and aptitude; therefore, only those that have the requirements succeed on the journey. It is contended that one of the contributing factors of unemployment cum underemployment among school leavers in the country could be inadequate or lack of vocational guidance to students while in and out of school. In other words, they are not given sufficient and relevant vocational or occupational information that will enable them to graduate from school to a suitable occupation. It is through a graduate's occupation that he/she is expected to serve the country, contribute and at the same time benefit from economic growth and national development. In a case where one is not properly guided in career decision-making by professional vocational guidance, it would not be possible for such an individual to contribute to economic and national development after graduation. From another viewpoint, vocational guidance programs in secondary schools have not been given the proper attention it deserves; and until the proper attention is given to this form of education program, the majority of secondary school students will continue to have difficulty in career decision-making (Anthonia, 2017). It is against these reasons that this study was conducted to determine the influence of vocational guidance on business students' career choices in secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria. The major purpose of the study was to determine the perceived influence of vocational guidance on business students' career choices in secondary school in Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to find out the extent to which vocational guidance influence business students' career choice in marketing in secondary school in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria.

Research Question

1. To what extent does vocational guidance influence business students' career choices in secondary school in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the mean response of male and female students regarding the influence of vocational guidance on business students' career choices in secondary school in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The researcher used a descriptive survey research design for the study. A questionnaire was used to collect data from the population who were located at various points in the study area. The population for the study comprised JSS 3 students. This is because, it is at this level students decided whether to choose science, commercial, or art class. There are 28 secondary schools comprising 1755 JSS 3 students in Ilorin West Local Government. Ten schools were randomly selected using simple random sampling techniques. A total number of 305 students were sampled using the research advisor sampling table (2006). A structured questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was designed by the researcher for the entire respondents, which appeared in two sections A and B. "A" sought personal information from

the respondents. Section “B” elicited responses based on the research question. For validation of the research instrument the researcher consulted three experts for proper examination. The split-half method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument; the instrument was divided into halves of odd and even numbers. The Spearman rank order correlation coefficient was used to calculate the reliability estimate of one-half (odd number), and the spearman Brown prophecy formula was used to calculate the reliability estimate of the instrument which was 0.78. Therefore, the instrument was found reliable and stable. The data collected were analyzed using frequencies and percentages for the personal data of the respondents. Mean and standard deviation were adopted to answer the research questions. Independent Samples t-test statistic was used to test null hypotheses at a (0.05) level of significance.

The level of acceptance or rejection of each questionnaire items was determined based on the mean ratings of items interpreted relative to real limits of numbers as follows: Very High Extent (4) 3.5 – 4.00, High Extent (3) 2.5 – 3.49, Low Extent (2) 1.5 – 2.49, Very Low Extent (1) 1.0 – 1.49. For the hypotheses, if the observed probability value is equal to or less than the fixed value ($p < 0.05$) the null hypothesis was rejected, otherwise the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Results

Analysis of Demographic Data

The demographic variable for the study were analyzed in Tables 1 as follows:

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	128	42.0
Female	177	58.0
Total	305	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2022

The data in table 1 revealed that there are 128 male respondents representing 42.0% and 177 female respondents representing 58.0%. This implies that female students are more in numbers than male students in Junior secondary School Three (3) in Kwara State.

Research Question 1: To what extent does vocational guidance influence business students' career choices in secondary school?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of responses on the extent vocational guidance influences business students' career choice in secondary school

S/N	Vocational guidance:	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Giving the students the confidence to decide what they want to do in the field of marketing.	2.76	0.62	High extent
2.	Helps students make career choices that are in line with their interests, aptitude, and abilities	2.95	0.66	High extent
3.	Helps the students prepare for salesmanship jobs.	2.87	0.57	High extent
4.	Help students relate education to employment opportunities in marketing.	3.11	0.71	High extent
5.	Equips parents and teachers with the necessary skills in the collection of job information related to marketing	2.55	0.74	High extent
Grand mean and SD		2.85	0.66	High extent

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation of responses on the extent to which vocational guidance influence business students' career choices in secondary school. The table reveals that the respondents indicated a high extent for all the items (1 to 5) with mean scores ranging from 2.55 to 3.11. All five items have standard deviation ranges from 0.57 to 0.74 which means that the responses of the respondents are not widespread as they are close to their respective mean scores. The table has grand mean and standard deviation scores of 2.85 and 0.66 respectively which indicates that all the items influence business students'

career choices to a high extent. The result, therefore, shows that vocational guidance has a positive influence on business students' career choices in secondary schools to a high extent (mean = 2.85, SD = 0.66).

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean response of male and female students regarding the influence of vocational guidance on business students' career choices in secondary school.

Table 3: Summary of t-test of the difference between the mean ratings of male and female students regarding the influence of vocational guidance on students' career choices in secondary school

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	Df	p-value	Decision
Male	128	2.61	0.55	16.147	303	0.091	Not Rejected
Female	177	2.67	0.64				

Source: Field survey, 2022

P>0.05

The data in Table 3 shows that there are 128 male and 177 female students. The female students' responses indicate a higher mean score ($\bar{x} = 2.67$; SD = 0.64) than male students ($\bar{x} = 2.61$; SD = 0.55). Their responses are close to the mean as the standard deviations are very low. The table reveals that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female students regarding the influence of vocational guidance on business students' career choices in secondary school ($t_{303} = 16.147$, P>0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This implied that male and female students did not differ in their responses regarding the influence of vocational guidance on business students' career choices in secondary school.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that vocational guidance has a positive influence on business students' career choices in secondary schools. This coincides with Bark (2013), who states that vocational guidance and the assistance made available by qualified and trained persons to an individual of any age to help him/her manage his or life activities, develop his or her points of view, make his or own decisions, and carry his burden. Further reveals that the adolescent stage is characterized by rapid growth and change: socially, spiritually, physically, morally, and intellectually. Most adolescents are in secondary schools, which is why vocational guidance and counseling services are very essential at that level. The study also agreed with Kazi, Nimra & Nawaz (2016) who state that numerous variables influence career decisions of secondary school students, which vocational guidance is not exempted, recognizing these variables would give individuals, instructors, and industry a thought as to where to put their trust in the profession choice procedure.

The findings also support the study of Shertzer and Stone (2013) who found out that interest depicted by students in some subjects will mostly lead to better examination performance and selection of profession in the same direction. All the studies discussed pointed to certain factors that could be the predicament for business students' career choices in marketing.

Conclusion

The introduction and implementation of vocational guidance at the secondary school level will allow the students to be aware of opportunities surrounding each career and taking proactive decisions with the help of guidance. This will allow them to understand their environment to succeed in school and work is imperative. The study concluded that emphasis on vocational and technical education at all levels of the nation's educational system should be taken, the rising level of unemployment of secondary school leavers and the growing complexity of industrial and business establishments are some factors that justify the implementation of vocational guidance services in secondary schools. Numerous ways need to be employed to realize the goals of vocational guidance in schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusions derived from the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. There should be the availability of experienced vocational guidance at the school who will guide the students based on records of achievement in relevant field of study.
2. Ministry of Education should enforce the establishment of counselling centers in both public and private secondary schools and implementation of counselling programmes.
3. Students should be motivated to share and discuss the choice of career with their counsellors and understand the relationship of subjects to a particular career.

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