



Relevance of Occupational Information in Enhancing Youth Career Stability: Implications for Counselling

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ABSTRACT

The major thrust of the relevance of occupational information worldwide is to address issues of youth unemployment, poverty and international competitiveness in skills development towards current and projected opportunities and challenges in the various careers they will find themselves after their education and also gain stability in such area of choice. This cannot be achieved without the counsellor's assistance to youth to understand, accept and utilize his abilities, aptitudes, interests and attitudinal patterns in relation to his aspirations. This informational service is designed to help each youth adjust to his environment, develop the ability to set realistic goals for himself and prove his total educational programme. This paper therefore, examines the factors responsible for low level of occupational information in enhancing youth career stability, its implications for counselling and suggests how occupational information can help to stem this trend. It is recommended that occupational information should be included in the school syllabus right from primary level to create the necessary career awareness to enable the youth make informed career choices, and qualified guidance counsellors posted to schools to help out on this particular area.

Keywords: Relevance, Occupational, Information, Youth, Career, Stability, Counselling.

INTRODUCTION

Nearly every information given to help the youth can be regarded as guidance information. Some of such information is not organised, while a good percentage comes under the caption "Guidance Information". What is labelled information service in school guidance programmes exists almost exclusively to enable youth become better informed and thereby make better and more appropriate choices among the educational and vocational opportunities available to them. When youth make unrealistic occupational choice, frustration, lack of interest, vocational maladjustment and misuse of talents would be the end result; which is linked to unrealistic academic occupational aspirations and misplacement of interest due to lack of appropriate career information (Nwokolo, 2012). Daodu (2008) states that the major thrust of occupational information is to address job-dissatisfaction, apathy to work, non-challant attitude to work, lack of early exposure to youth and adolescents to career awareness, failure to implement these for youth commitment to his/her career would become an agent of disability in society. Hence the need to assist youth and young people by equipping them with appropriate strategies that would make them to have access and acquire relevant occupational information to make wise and realistic career decisions (Wentling & Lawson, 2015). In spite of its importance, occupational information is so misconstrued that it has become extremely difficult in management perspective, to administer the programme to meet societal ever changing needs without the recognition of the guidance counsellor (Toby, 2000).

Concept of Occupational Information

According to Osuala (2010), occupational information is a systematically organised data used by guidance personnel for the purpose of helping persons make a vocational choice which includes information on the nature of work, duties performed, responsibilities, and compensations involved in various vocations, information about employment outlook, promotion opportunities and entrance requirements. In the same vein, Hayes & Hopson (2013) noted that occupational information are facts about jobs for use in vocational guidance a description of a man's work and its related conditions and information about the world of work occupation. Ikeotuonye (1998) noted that occupational formation is a process which incorporates as many details as possible about the available occupational opportunities meant to help the individuals not only to make an effective career choice but also to adjust to and make success in it. According to Osa-Edoh (2008), under a good vocational guidance/career education, youth can be made to understand how beneficial with individual abilities and interests. She further noted that a good school programme of career education is a value to the counsellor who is equipped with the necessary skills on how to collect, analyse, interpret and present relevant information about occupation to youth/students. Ekpenyong (2008) notes that based on the government national policy, occupational information should benefit youth and students in at least two ways:

- a) by the provision of career guidance and counselling services
- b) through job placement.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is developed on the theoretical framework of the Trait and factor theory propounded by which is based on the psychology of individual differences and the requirements of various occupations.

- a) A clear understanding of self, abilities, aptitudes, interests, ambitions, resources and personality
- b) A detailed knowledge of the requirements, conceptions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensations, opportunities and prospects in different lines of work.
- c) A true reasoning of the relationship between self and job characteristics of *a* and *b* above. In other words, an individual (youth) has to compare his capabilities and dispositions with the demands of the job and then select the job he/she matches best (Hoppock, 2014). This paper adopts this theory to study the relevance of occupational information in enhancing youth career stability and its implications to counselling.

Need for Occupational Information

Occupational information is important and useful in several ways to pupils in the primary school, students in secondary school, graduates of colleges and universities and youth/people wishing to change their job (Hayes & Hopson, 2013). It helps in occupational decision making where people know the stability and prospects of a particular occupation before making a choice, they are saved from the problems of choosing occupations that are already saturated which may have no prospects for them (Isaacson, 2014). This type of information can only be made available through the various sources of occupational information. This opinion is corroborated by Parsons (1998) requirements for a particular occupation are made available for youth/people through the provision of occupational information. When a person is given information on the skills and competencies required for a particular occupation, he is more equipped to know whether he is fit for it or not. Darvin (2015) noted that people have very often chosen some occupations only to find out when it is already too late, that they do not like the occupations and this leads to job dissatisfaction and frustration. The provision of occupational information, therefore, prevents job dissatisfaction and frustration in a job, and eliminates inefficiency and low productivity. Ezeji (2001) suggested that occupational information provided at the secondary school level will make the youth/young school leavers aware of the occupations available in their community and the requirements for such occupations. Where occupational information is provided, students will be able to know that it is not only the prestige and name attached to an occupation that is necessary in making a choice but that choice should be based on the interest coupled with ability to succeed on the chosen occupation. Okorie

(2005) opined that when youth have a good knowledge of the occupations of their career, they are enabled to compare each quality they possess or lack with the special requirements of a given occupation. This will enable choose only those occupations they possess their requirement. Availability of occupational information to youth helps them to know the amount of training required for a particular job and the demands of the occupation in terms of duties and responsibilities (Evans, 2011).

Types of Occupational Information

Information provided under this category includes:

- 1) Type of educational and vocational skills and knowledge required: For a variety of given occupations. The youth/students' school history and record work while in school should provide the needed information for the youth. Other sources of information includes vocational inventories, achievement tests, interest inventories and anecdotal records (Happack, 2014)
- 2) Salary and Fringe Benefits: Darvin (2015) occupational information should include type of reward in the form of salary, fringe benefits such as free accommodation, leave and children's allowances, opportunities for in-service training, scholarship for their children, opportunity for accelerated promotions, insurance benefits etc.
- 3) Pension Scheme: Occupational information should relate to the pension scheme the retiring age and nature and type of gravity to be paid including: Work free days, whether work requires shifts, extensive traveling, night duty, absence from home for many days or weeks and if it requires working for long hours (Evans, 2011).
- 4) Attitudes: O'Reilly (2011) noted that information relating to attitudes is required for successful performance in a job such as cool headedness, ability to reason and understand other peoples view, sincerity, honest and dedication to duty, since they are all features of occupational information for attitude training.
- 5) Self-understanding: Occupational information should be provided in the area of health of the individual/youth, this is obtained through interviews with youth, and their parents, test and examination records' from competent medical institutions or family physicians, Toby (2000). Wentling (2015) opined that mental ability or academic aptitudes of the youth are also essential information required in various occupations.

Sources of Occupational Information

According to Ikeotuonye (1998) occupational information can be made available to those who are in need of it at any level. At the primary school level, pupils may show interest in certain occupational information is, however expressed at the secondary school level. Youth]students this level are ready to choose vocations and thus like to have as much information as they can obtain on occupation available in theft society (Hages & Hopson, 2013). Information available on occupation include:

Libraries: Stock a lot of books on different occupations and disciplines. There are books that are specially on occupations and youth can lay their hands on these books when they need occupational information (Okorie, 2005).

Information Bureaus: According to Happock (2014) information Bureaus are organisations which specialize on information collection in different areas. A visit to these bureaus could go a long way in providing youth in need of occupational information.

Field Trip: Occupational information can be obtained through field trips and excursions. Youth visit factories to observe the works at work. Through these visits, information on the type of people employed, responsibilities and duties of the workers can be obtained (Kelly, 2001).

Counsellors: Schools have occupational counsellors, one of the services provided by these counsellors is the provision of occupational information. The counsellor analyses different jobs' to find their requirements, remunerations and opportunities for advancement.

Mass Media: Radio, Television and Newspapers are other sources of occupational information.

Career Conferences: This is large official meeting, usually lasting for a few days at which people with the same work or interest come together to discuss their views (Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary

(2001). It is usually a discussion or group which gives opportunity to experts and professional to talk about careers. Through career conferences, youth/students have the opportunity to ask questions about vocation.

At such meetings, the professionals from various vocational careers could highlight on their occupations with regard to what they do, the advantages and disadvantages, methods of entry, salaries, promotions (Iwuama 1991). A career conference could be organized for the whole youth/school, a class, or for a group of youth/schools and could be for a single day or several days or weeks. It could be organised for out of school youth, final year students on the verge of leaving school or for senior secondary phase of their schooling.

Parent Teachers Association (PTA): According to Olayinka (1979), parents play vital role in giving occupational information to their children. He suggested that the parent Teachers Association is also a forum that can be utilize to enlighten parents about job opportunities for their children and they can be motivate them to be achievement oriented.

Scope of Occupational Information

Canada's Blueprint for Life (2014) outlined competencies related to occupational information for elementary, secondary and post secondary/adult levels. Complexity in the competencies is increased as the career development continues throughout life.

Elementary Education: Understanding the use age of occupational information in

- Exploring the work of family and community members
- Identify occupations by people, data, things
- Discover how interest, knowledge, skills, beliefs and attitudes relates to work roles.
- Learn how parents, friends and relatives can provide career information.

Secondary Education: Locate and evaluate interpretation of occupational information

- Explore the educational and training requirements of various work roles
- Acquire knowledge of classification system and career ladders.
- Discover how key personnel in selected work roles could become information resources and role models.

Post Secondary/Adult Education can locate, evaluate and interpret occupational information by

- Identify and use career information resources (through computer internet based career information delivery systems, print, media, monitors)
- Identifying available work opportunities with respect to one's work, skill, knowledge and attitudes.
- Understand how to assess the reliability of career information.
- Explore opportunities for self-employment.

Hence it is not an over-emphasis to state that the provision of reliable and update of occupational information is indispensable to the career stability of matured individual in the society, the involvement of the elementary, secondary and post-secondary education is very vital to the relevance of occupational information in enhancing youth career stability.

Objectives of Occupational Information in the Enhancement of Youth Career Stability

According to Iwuama (1991), objectives of occupational information include:

- To increase youth/students' understand of their abilities, interests, values and other personality traits distinct from those of others and to use the understanding to identify occupational areas which may be more appropriate for them.
- To aid youth/students develop an acceptable self-image and realistic attitude to school achievement as necessary prelude to vocations.
- To help youth/students to understand the prevailing circumstance in the world of work and the worthwhileness of legitimate occupations as well as inculcating in them the dignity of labour.

- To help them identify different occupational areas that are available both in the immediate and more distant future, the nature and purpose of each and the direction to which each leads.
- To assist youth/students develop and execute career plans which will help them in achieving their career goals by taking appropriate courses at the secondary level or other relevant steps/training after the secondary level that would qualify them for particular occupations.
- Also, provision of occupational information helps the future of the youth to be stable and secure. Once an individual can make a realistic career decision, well trained and gainfully employed with stable source of income. Certainly, such a youth or individual already has a secure future. At the same time, he or she would contribute meaningfully to the development of the society.

Career Education Option as a Boost for Occupational Information

Career refers to a pattern of decision, transactions and adjustments related to one's role in work, education, family, community and leisure (Iwuama, 1991). On other hand, career education is seen as providing the youth with skills attitude and information which they need to successfully enter the labour market smoothly at whatever point they leave school. Ekpenyong (2008) noted that Frank Parson (1998) in his book "choosing a vocational" lists 3 factors which should govern career guidance inter alia;

- a) A clear understanding of oneself, its attitude, abilities, interest ambitions, resources, limitations and causes
- b) A knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensations opportunities and the prospects in different lines of work and
- c) True reasoning of the relations of the two groups of factors.

This implies that individuals should make a choice by true understanding of a and b above for appropriate career development. Akinboye (2002) corroborated this fact by standing that the responsibility of career counsellor is to help the youth/students to develop healthy attitudes, knowledge, skill and behaviour towards work so that they can make effective and hitch-free transitions for school to work.

CONCLUSION

This paper has viewed national stability of any state or nation in line with occupational stability of the individuals, particularly the youthful generation of the nation. A nation that its citizens are adequately stable occupationally, there will be a total reduction of youth restiveness like hostage taking of prominent citizens and expatriates, arm insurgence, cultism, political hooliganism and other violent behaviour in the society. For the achievement of career stability, there must be proper channel for dissemination of occupational information within the school system and outside. CASSON must work in synergy with qualified registered counsellors from primary school level to tertiary institution, to ensure that occupational information is provided. Every counsellor in all categories of education must champion this course.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Occupational information should be provided to the youth through talk shows, seminars, orientations, career weeks, role playing, television programmes, especially at junior and senior secondary school level.

Due to scarcity of trained guidance counsellors in most of our schools especially secondary schools, government should give incentives to universities that don't have guidance and counselling department to enable them run courses on guidance and counselling to produce more counsellors and the teachers in the secondary schools should be made to undertake in service training on youth/adolescent career education to complement counsellors' effort.

- Occupational or career education should be made a compulsory subject in the secondary school curriculum by the government, the curriculum planners and educational policy makers. This will help youth/adolescent to obtain relevant occupational information at the right time.'

- The counsellors' office, even the school library should be well equipped with the current books, journals, career talk cassettes, magazines, videotapes, industrial training materials etc. which can give right occupational information on some professional occupational career, work environment and different write-ups that can help provide answers to various career related questions of the youth/adolescent. These materials should be easily accessible and self explanatory for easy understanding.
- The world is now a global village, internet facilities should be made available for the youth to enable them seek and get occupation information globally, this will help them know about global occupational opportunities and its requirements. This will serve as motivation for the youth to be more committed to their academic pursuits, and actualize their dream career and be stabilized in the world of work.
- Parents should allow their children to make career choices personally and not coerce them into their own career interests. Rather parents should complement the school/counsellors efforts by getting good materials at home such as career based magazines, newspapers, both local and foreign that provides occupational information.

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