Appraisal of Vocational Guidance Services in Secondary Schools in Rivers State: Implications for Counseling

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ABSTRACT
The study sought to investigate the appraisal of vocational guidance services in secondary schools in Rivers State with implications to counseling. The descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 750, while the Tsaro Yamen formula was used to obtain a sample size of 259 respondents. The random sampling technique was adopted for the study, while the descriptive statistic of Mean was used to answer the stated research questions. Three research questions were answered, while questionnaire was the instrument used to collect data for the study. The instrument was validated and reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained. The result of the statistical analyses showed that vocational information service and vocational counseling services assist secondary school students in Rivers State, finally it was found that vocational preparation service enhance secondary school students academic achievement. It was therefore recommended among others that group counseling sessions/workshops/seminars should be held for students. Also that vocation counseling matched with entrepreneurial education should be vigorously pursued and implemented right from the basic level of education. Finally, school counseling programme should be strengthened and fully implemented to enhance a guaranteed future for our children.

Keywords: Appraisal, Vocational Guidance Services, Secondary Schools, Rivers State

INTRODUCTION
The problem of choosing, preparing and entering into vocational careers have existed since the dawn of civilization. Vocational development process involves sociological, cultural, psychological and economic ingredients which results in outcomes that are effective in vocational behaviour, vocational maturity, decision-making and ability. Thus as physical and intellectual development can be prevented from growing if appropriate interventions are not applied, so can the normal developmental process of vocational development be stunted if appropriate interventions are not available in a planned, systematic way. There are specific skills that should be constructed and maintained throughout the life span in order to deal with career choice and management tasks at any given point in time (Super, 1996). The skills includes; a well-defined self-concept, knowledge of self-attributes,
broad knowledge of the world of work, detailed knowledge and reality testing of occupations under consideration, awareness of the need to plan ahead, decision-making skill, knowledge and use of appropriate resources for career decision making. This set of skills, indicative of career maturity, can be used again and again in the changeable 21st century work environment.

One of the primary goals of functional education system is to equip its products with the necessary skills and values for productive living. In pursuance of the goal, the Federal Government of Nigeria determines to make Nigerian education relevant to the life of the individual (FRN, 2013). Consequently, schools are set at the various levels of education to translate the government vision into reality. At the primary and post primary levels, the schools are expected to provide the tripartite functions of administration, instruction and guidance and counseling service (Super, 1996). Counseling services, according to Anwana (2005), are designed to enable an individual to gain self-understanding of himself as well as his self-direction. The services are offered by a counselor who is professionally competent in relevant psychologically skills and knowledge to assist the client.

Over the years, counseling services have been adopted at the primary and post primary levels in Nigeria, and they have been found to play a good complementary role to other school programmes. It is assumed that with the increasing complexities in the society, the growth of industrial and technological development, most students find it difficult to adjust themselves to the school challenges, the society expectations, selecting and entering into sustainable occupations as well as adjusting to satisfactory family roles (Ilgar, 2004). He observed that within the school, children have counseling needs ranging from educational, personal-social and vocational which if not properly handled, may lead to their maladjustment or frustrations in their later lives. Ilgar (2004) proposed that it is common to state that students choose subjects of study which have little relationship with their vocational goals, with the result that many people get a traumatic shock when they find that they have not prepared themselves for the career which they wanted to enter. So such mistakes are to be realized very late in an individual’s life time.

Educationally, counseling and guidance services help the students adapt to school make educational decisions and choices by informing them about educational facilities (Ilgar, 2004). They help the students choose the most appropriate elective course (Canel, 2007). An organized programme of vocational guidance assists students in taking decisions wisely and realistically. Super (1996) asserted that vocational guidance may be seen as a process of helping a person to develop and accept an integrated and adequate picture of himself, and of his role in the world of work, as well as to test this concept against reality and to convert it into a reality with satisfaction to him and benefit to society. The secondary school stage is an important step for acquiring desired positive personality features and getting ready for secondary school and vocational orientation (Canel, 2007).

Kaur (2005) investigated vocational career maturity among the students of public and government schools in Nigeria. The results clearly proved that the students of public schools possess a higher career maturity attitude, career maturity competence, as well as self concept and achievement motivation. And so other studies have been presented bordering on this construct but have failed to address the timing challenges within its ambiance. The present study aims to examine the vocational guidance service in secondary school in Rivers State.

**Statement of the Problem**

Students tend to have difficulty identifying their vocational career interests. Research by Canel (2007) identifies how vocational career interest can be linked to students’ academic achievement. Counselors and educators need to help students develop skills for their job search in vocational careers that are congruent with their individualized career plan (Imoiboho, 2014). This involves a great deal of career and vocational services. As students move towards high school, families often assume that children and counselors will work together to establish a career and post-secondary education plan, so they believe their role as parents decreases (Amatea, Daniels, Bringman, & Vandiver, 2004). High school counselors face the difficult task of working with a large number of students. Therefore, many students complete high school and are ignorant to college choice and career processes and decisions. These students tend to enroll in colleges or universities, hoping that time will allow them to make a decision and solidify their future. As a result, these students waste time, money, and effort, unsure of what to expect from life (Amatea et al., 2004). Hence, school counselors must recognize the needs of
their students and provide information to parents so that the family assumes a more involved role in developing sol child’s or children’s vocational career path.

Traditionally, counselors educate parents on how to continue the therapeutic process at home with their children. It cannot be over-emphasized that parents prove to play an integral role in their child’s development (Ilgar, 2004). Ilgar stated further that children experience difficulty identifying their vocational career interests as a result of insufficient and poor vocational guidance. Ilgar went further to advance that vocational guidance interests have been linked to positive student achievement. It is this gap that this study seeks to fill, thus it attempts to engage teacher/parents in the creation of healthier guidance/counseling activities that will enhance student’s career choice making by improving decision-making skills and self-regulation. Hence the need while this study is carried out as to appraise the vocational guidance services in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions
The following research questions were raised in the study:

1. How does vocational information service assist secondary school students in Rivers State?
2. How does vocational counseling service assist secondary school students in Rivers State?
3. How does vocational preparation service assist secondary school students in Rivers State?

Overview of Vocational Guidance Services
Vocational guidance is referred to as the various process of assisting someone to accept and develop an organized picture of himself and to advance a good role in his or her work place (Imoiboho, 2014). Imoiboho stated further that it provides for a special aim and objective. It helps individuals to finding realistic, satisfying, and interesting roles in their environment. Vocational guidance services therefore, refers to those services that assist students/individuals to make judicious educational, training and, occupational choice and to manage their career (Anwana, 2005). Anwana listed the following activities:

(a) To assist students within schools to clarify career goals, understand world of work and develop career management skills. (b) To provide for individual and group guidance. To assist students with decision making regarding initial courses of vocations, training and further education and job choices. (c) To have an organized and systematic support of community members and to provide occupational and educational advice and information to students. In the view of Anwana (2005), the concept of vocational guidance and counseling refers to expert (Science Based) assistance and support with the aim to help the individual to:

(a) Explore, analyze and develop the factors constituting their self concept (Interests, personal qualities, characteristics, skills etc.)(b) Explore, evaluate, process and classify information into alternative education and vocational pathways with respect to both their needs and choice to labour market requirement. (c) Interpret information about education and vocational career with information derived from self observation so that they develop decision making capabilities both with respect to their orientation in education and choice in occupation(s) befitting their particular psycho-social makeup. (d) Create and implement their own education and vocational plans. Ultimately the individual will be able to make the correct choice with respect to their future occupation/ Vocation and thus live a fulfilled and active life. Since a guidance programme is concerned with meeting student needs, it can be structured only as a service to help the student in the identification of his abilities, aptitude, interests and attitudes. It also involves assisting him to understand, accept, utilize his traits and provides him with opportunities for learning about areas of occupational and educational endeavours and to help him in obtaining experiences which will enable him in making free and wise choices. It helps him in developing his potentials to the optimum so that he may become the individual he is capable of becoming and lastly to help him in becoming self directive.

Udofia and Sam (2009) opined that vocational guidance is the process of assisting the individual to choose an occupation, prepare, enter and progress in it. It is concerned with helping individuals make right decisions and choices involved in planning a future and building a career effecting satisfactory vocational adjustment. According to Udofia and Sam (2009), the main purpose of vocational guidance is to serve the individual and society, to prevent maladjustment and dissatisfaction so as to ensure efficient use of man power. To provide Print based / Computer based services to disseminate
information about jobs, careers, vocational training, and help individual make a career decision well. Organized vocational guidance services are important both to the education system and labour market as well as their interface. Within the education system, vocational education has an important role to play in laying the foundation of a life-long career development. These include knowledge, competencies regarding self – awareness, the world of work and making career decisions and transitions. Vocational guidance helps individuals to acquire knowledge in the following areas:- Self awareness, exploration of the world of work and mature decision making (Kaur, 2005).

Functions of Vocational Guidance Service
Yuksel (2007) describe the following as the various functions of vocational guidance service.  
1) Adjustment- It helps the student to make appropriate adjustment in an educational institution, work, home and community.  
2) Orientation- It helps the student in career planning and long term personal goals.  
3) Development- It helps the student to get rid of his problems, check maladjustments and contribute to his self development, self realization and natural development thus furthering the welfare of the society. It is therefore an important instrument of national development. Vocational guidance at secondary level concerns with the development of proper vocational attitude (Imoiboho, 2014). It is concerned with helping student in planning broad education and vocational direction not necessarily constituting to final choice but selecting probable broad zone of direction of interest for future exploration and study.

Imoiboho (2014) opined that students are usually ready for exploration somewhat more vocational in tone, but he is not yet ready to choose and plan for special occupation. Dissemination of occupational information to students in secondary schools should be considered enough as part of vocational guidance. Just orientation to the world of work should be considered sufficient. Collecting and dissemination of information about students abilities, aptitude, interest, personal characteristic are important .The psychological tests and observations records knowledge about students should be gathered and discussed to them. Each student should be helped in developing a picture of his personality profile. He should be helped to crystallize his self concept.

Vocational Guidance Services
Yuksel (2007) advanced that comprehensive guidance programme in secondary schools today are concerned with 8 different services “. They are as follows:- vocational Information Service, Self Inventory Service, Personal Data Collection, Counseling Service, Vocational Preparation Service, Placement Service, Follow up Service, Research service  

Vocational Information Service: The first step is for the school to supply information concerning occupation to children according to aptitude, temperament etc. This involves career conference, talks by visitors/specialists, A.V Aids / information technology/ Films/ Radio/TV, General visits to places of work.  

Self Inventory Service: This function is to assist the child in knowing his assets and liabilities without which he cannot make wise decisions. It includes: Exploratory or Try- out Experience/ Test- This is through: Exploratory through Part Time employment/Tests, Exploratory through School Subject/s, Self Rating, Self Analysis- The student should be given enough opportunities to discover himself.  

Personal Data Collection: Six kinds of data concerning each student are needed for use in vocational guidance programme. They comprise of:- General Data, Physical Data, Pyschological Datam, Social Environment Data, Achievement Data, Data Concerning individual and his vocational plans.  

Counseling Service: Vocational Counselor assists the student and marshal’s pertinent facts and evaluates them in relationship with his vocational plan.  

Vocational Preparation Service: It is the service that is rendered to an individual to assist him in receiving training before entering into a regular full time employment. Arrangement for vocational preparation should make provision for- Preparation before employment begins, Preparation in connection with employment, Preparation for change in employment.  

Placement Service: Students entering occupational life advantageously and getting a good start is quite and as important as choosing and preparing for a suitable occupation.
Follow-up Service: School authorities should keep in touch with the students whilst they are in school and even when they launch into their choice career.

Research service: The major aim is to bring about improvement in other services and of the programme as a whole.

The guidance programme in a school can work efficiently if all these service are organized in an efficient manner. They facilitate good teaching and efficient learning to the students and explore necessary supplements to academic achievements which are the primary responsibility of the educational institution. It will also help in decreasing wastage, improve student performance, lower class absenteeism, create favourable faculty, eliminate student indiscipline and unrest. On the whole create a congenial atmosphere in the institution.

Challenges of Vocational Guidance Service

From observation, Guidance and Counseling is only given a lip service treatment as services of counselors are yet to be really recognized in most public and private primary and secondary schools in Nigeria (Olusakin, 2005). Fitch and Marshall (2004) asserted that some schools that create spaces for counselors ensures that those designated as counselors are tasked with many duties that overshadow their perceived counseling duties. Some situations are observed where students with deep personal-social problems, educational problems, hardly consult school counselors. It is either those counselors do not know how to exert their influence in the school communities or the school authorities do not accord Guidance and Counseling a pride of place in their schools. Equally, the non-school setting Guidance and Counseling are mostly offered by religious organizations which in most cases are not handled by qualified counselors (Olusakin, 2005).

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the descriptive research design. The population of this study was 750 respondents which consisted of Junior Secondary School students from Port Harcourt International Secondary School Rumuola, Government Girls Secondary School Oromenike Port Harcourt, and Government Technical College Port Harcourt, all in Rivers State. Tsaro Yeman formula was used to obtain a sample size of 259 while the random sampling technique was adopted for the study. A structured questionnaire entitled ‘Vocational Guidance Services in Secondary Schools (VGSSS) with a four point rating scale was designed and used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation, and a reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained for the study. The statistic of Mean was used to answer the research questions. The response options were given numbers “Disagreed”, “Strongly Disagreed”, “Agreed” and “Strongly Agreed” respectively.

Decision Rule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.1 – 1.4</td>
<td>Disagreed (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 – 2.4</td>
<td>Strongly disagreed (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 – 3.4</td>
<td>Agreed (A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 and above</td>
<td>Strongly Agreed (SA)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RESULTS

Research Question 1: How does vocational information service assist secondary school students in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean analysis of how vocational information service assist secondary school students in Rivers State.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Questionnaire Items</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Vocational information service assists students in obtaining necessary information about their career.</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vocational information service assists children in career choice making.</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teachers get information concerning the characteristics, needs and opportunities of the students.</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey Data, 2017.
The mean score of 2.7 implies that vocational information service assist students in obtaining necessary information about their career. The mean score of 2.5 agrees that vocational information service assists children in career choice making, while the mean score of 2.9 agrees that teachers get information concerning the characteristics, needs and opportunities of the students.

**Research Question 2:** How does vocational counseling service assist secondary school students in Rivers State?

**Table 2:** Mean analysis of how vocational counseling service assist secondary school students in Rivers State.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Questionnaire Items</th>
<th>( \bar{X} )</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Vocational counseling service assists students obtain proper counseling.</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vocational counseling service assists student’s creative ability.</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>It helps students to work towards the solution of their varied personal adjustment problems.</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Survey Data, 2017.

The mean score of 2.7 entails that vocational counseling service assists students obtain proper counseling. The mean score of 3.1 implies that vocational counseling service assists student’s creative ability, while the mean score of 3.3 means that vocational counseling service help students to work towards the solution of their varied personal adjustment problems.

**Research Question 3:** How does vocational preparation service assist secondary school students in Rivers State?

**Table 3:** Mean analysis of how vocational preparation service assist secondary school students in Rivers State.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Questionnaire Items</th>
<th>( \bar{X} )</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Vocational preparation service assists student’s choice of vocation.</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Assisting the school and its staff in understanding and working closely together.</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Vocational preparation service reveals the need for guidance services.</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Survey Data, 2017.

The mean score of 3.1 implies that vocational preparation service assists student’s choice of vocation. The mean score of 2.9 agrees that assisting the school and its staff in understanding and working closely together, while the mean score of 2.6 means that vocational preparation service reveals the need for guidance services.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

One of the major findings of this study was that vocational information service assists secondary school students in Rivers State. This was evident from the mean scores (2.7 implies that vocational information service assist students in obtaining necessary information about their career, 2.5 entails that vocational information service assists children in career choice making, and 3.5 agrees that teachers get information concerning the characteristics, needs and opportunities of the students). This finding was supported that the view of Udofia and Sam (2009) that vocational information services matched with entrepreneurial education will possibly provide the students with various opportunities to successfully experience more challenging educational activities, and situations that will enable them to develop insight needed to discover entrepreneurial opportunities. By this, students would graduate from schools to become job creators rather than being job seekers. Also, it was found that vocational counseling service assist secondary school students in Rivers State. This was also depicted in the mean score of the study (2.7 implying that vocational counseling service assists students obtain proper counseling, 3.1 implies that vocational counseling service assists student’s creative ability, while 3.3 means that vocational counseling service help students to work towards the solution of their
varied personal adjustment problems). This finding is in line with the view of Eneh and Usen (2009) who maintained that vocational counseling service is the most important contributor to help reduce disability in the community and make the community develop healthy attitudes towards the disabled. Finally, it was found that vocational preparation service assists secondary school students in Rivers State. The finding of this study was drawn from the result of the data analysis (The mean score of 3.1 implies that vocational preparation service assists student’s choice of vocation. The mean score of 2.9 agrees that assisting the school and its staff in understanding and working closely together, while the mean score of 2.6 means that vocational preparation service reveals the need for guidance services). This provides that vocational preparation service facilitates good teaching and efficient learning to the students and explore necessary supplements to academic achievements which are the primary responsibility of the educational institution. It will also help in decreasing wastage, improve student performance, lower class absenteeism, create favourable faculty, eliminate student indiscipline and unrest. On the whole, it will also create a congenial atmosphere in the institution.

Implications for Counseling Services
Given the above findings, specific counseling needs should be rendered on HIV/AIDS endemic, drug taking and abuse and family life. It also implies that Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) need to assist the government in employing the services of professional counselors in this regard. This is because vocation counseling matched with entrepreneurial education should be vigorously pursued and implemented right from the basic level of education. Thus it should form part of the school curriculum. However, the implication here is that only counselors with minimum qualification of Masters degree who have been subjected to screening test should be licensed to practice for effective and efficient professionalism, hence the need for counselors in Nigeria to be well versed with the cultural settings of the clients to enable them adopt counseling techniques that would enhance result-oriented counseling relationship.

CONCLUSION
Vocational guidance and counseling services have been identified as indispensable tools of assisting people to adjust for lie actualization. Counseling services rendered in school settings enhance students’ realization of potentialities for functional living. In the non-school setting, counseling services are used for the purpose of rehabilitation of mal-adjusted individuals in the society. Vocational counseling services also help reduce un-employment in the labour market.

RECOMMENDATIONS
To achieve a stable society through the implementation of Guidance and Counseling services in the global context, the following recommendations are offered:
1. Counseling rehabilitation and recreational centres should be set up in various communities where counseling services should be obtained. Group counseling sessions/workshops/seminars should be held there for students, youths and other interested members of the public.
2. School counseling programme should be strengthened and fully implemented to enhance a guaranteed future for our children.

REFERENCES


