



Therapeutic effect of Counseling in the Selection of Subject Combination among Secondary School Students in Rivers State

***UKOIMA, Nkalo Ruth; Mina Agnes Dick & Dimkpa, Ann Chioma**

**Department of Educational Foundation,
Rivers State University, Nkpolu Oroworokwu, Port Harcourt, Nigeria**

***Corresponding Author's E-mail Address: ruthukoima@ust.edu.ng**

ABSTRACT

The study examined the therapeutic effect of counseling in the selection of subject combination among secondary school students in Rivers State. The main purpose of the study was to investigate the therapeutic effect of counseling in the selection of subject combination among Secondary School students in Rivers State, specifically four (4) objectives were stated for study. Based on the stated objectives, four (4) research questions and four (4) null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The design of the study was descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised of 5,440 public senior secondary school II students and all school counsellors in Obio-Akpor Local Government Areas in Rivers State. Stratified random sampling technique was used to draw 544 students and school counsellors for the study. The instrument was established using test-retest method resulting to 0.86. z-test statistical was used to analyze the four null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The finding showed that there is significant effect between parental pressure and subject selection of students in secondary schools. There is significant effect between peer pressure and subject selection of students in secondary schools. Recommendations made are as follows: students should be allowed to select their subject combination based on the personal interest. All of the external influences should be avoided.

Keywords: Therapeutic effects, counseling, subject combination, secondary schools, parental pressure, peer group, personal interest, family background.

INTRODUCTION

Guidance and counselling services in Nigeria Secondary Schools have for a very long time been left in the hands of school teachers who are already overloaded and without professional training in the area of guidance and counseling. Bearing in mind that, our curriculum has passed through different and significant stages of change in terms of scope and contents. Many subjects were introduced and more formalized. For example, Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) directed that every student shall take all the six core subject: English Language, Mathematics, a major Nigerian language, one of biology, chemistry, physics or health science, one of literature in English, history, geography or religious studies and a vocational subject and a minimum of one and a maximum of two from the list of elective subjects, agriculture, applied electricity, auto-mechanics, book keeping and accounting, building construction, commerce, computer education, electronics, clothing and textiles, food and nutrition, home management, metal work, technical drawing, woodwork, shorthand, typewriting, fine art, store keeping, book keeping, GSM maintenance and repairs, animal husbandry, fishery, marketing and salesmanship to give a minimum of seven (7) and maximum of eight (8) subjects. However, Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) also indicated that each students is to take the four (4) compulsory cross-cutting subjects for the trade entrepreneurship subject, each student is expected to select one (1) trade/entrepreneurship subject. Each

student may then choose two (2) three (3), four (4), or five (5) subjects from each of their preferred four fields of studies depending on their potential, interest and capability such that the minimum number of subjects is eight (8) while the maximum number of subjects is nine (9).

Many students (children) go to school without knowing what they are supposed to do, and leave school without any idea of what type of jobs or careers they should follow. In addition, they have little understanding of themselves and their socio-economic and political environment (Abubakar, Zaliha and Muhammed, 2018). Many school leavers today, end up on the streets and quite a sizeable number keep on moving from job to job, trying to explore, within the world of work, which job meets their interest and capabilities. The majority of these school leavers are not aware of their potentials therefore, there is a need to help young people and students (children) to know themselves, i.e. their abilities, interest, personalities, values and beliefs and potentials.

According to Melvin (2015), secondary school education is the engine room of knowledge acquisition, a stage at which students come in contact with various subjects, which determine the field of study they will like to pursue in higher schools. Secondary school education is kind of level after the primary education and before higher education. Its position in educational system also speaks of its importance. Schwarzeller (2012) see secondary school as that which provides an outside view of what needs to happen in order for change to occur and also an equal opportunity for developing capabilities and talents. Education reforms Nigeria always have the secondary schools as main focus. In fact, it is viewed as powerful stage for knowledge, skill and experience acquisition as well as a wide range of career prospects for young boys and girls (Ezekwesili, 2016).

Counselling is a system that is targeted towards strengthening secondary school education and providing students with more practical knowledge that can make self-reliant after secondary school. Kutara (2017) opines that, in individual differences exist among people, this has an effect on who the individuals are and what they are capable of doing. What an individual does is sometimes variances with his ability, aptitudes capability and interest. Individual differences in the rate of growth, intellect, school achievement, sex usually set the pace where students look at themselves in career orientation. But such factors as home, the school, the mosque or church and the community for very vital factors in the student's environment thus, influencing their subject selection and career choice or aspirations. It is in view of these therefore, this study highlighted the counsellor effects in selection of subjects combination and reviewed senior secondary school curriculum, the challenges faced by secondary school students in subject as well as the conditions and challenges faced by guidance and counsellor in discharging their duties in public secondary schools. It however highlighted on the recognition of guidance and counselling made by national policy education and its reliance in schools as well as putting forward some counselling tips that may enhance proper career development among our secondary school students. These would no doubt prepare them for adult life as well as help them acquire appropriate attitudes and values that would enable them to become productive and active members of their communities so as to have better education and development in Rivers State and beyond 2020.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine therapeutic effect of counselling in the selection of subject combination among secondary school students in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

1. Determine how group pressure affect subject combination of students in secondary school peer.
2. Determine how family background affect subject combination of students in secondary school?

Research Questions

The following research questions was formulated to guide the study:

1. What is the effect of peer pressure on subject combination of students in secondary school?
2. To what extent does family background affect subject combination of students in secondary school?

The researcher formulated the following null hypotheses that guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of peer group pressure on the subject combination of students in secondary schools.

2. There is no significant difference between the mean rating of family background on the subject combination of students in secondary schools.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted descriptive survey research design for the study. Descriptive research gives a clear picture of a situation and it serves as a basis for most researchers in assessing the situation as a prerequisite for conclusion it attempts to describe or document current conditions or attitudes, that is to explain what exist in the moment (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011).

The population of the study consist of all school counselors and students in all the senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State with a sample size of 5,440. The sampling technique used for the study is a stratified random sampling technique involves dividing the entire population into homogenous groups called strata. Random samples are then selected from each stratum. The instrument used for the study is a structured questionnaire with 16 items pattern towards 4 points rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) -4, Agree (A) – 3, Disagree (D) – 2, Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1. The data gathered from the research questions were analysed using mean and standard deviation while the null hypotheses were tested using z-test statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

This section deals with the presentation and analysis of data collected for the study, the interpretation of results as well as the findings that emerged from the analysis of data. In the section, each of the research questions has been restated, and the results of the data analysis carried out.

Data Presentation

Research Question 1: *How does peer group pressure affect student’s subject combination in secondary schools in Rivers State?*

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis on Peer group Pressure on Students Subject Combination in Secondary Schools

S/N	Items	Counsellors (N=40)			Students (N=504)		
		Mean \bar{x}	SD	Remark	Mean \bar{x}	SD	Remark
1.	Students intelligence is a tip that enhance students proper career choice or selection in secondary schools	2.55	0.80	Agreed	3.20	0.89	Agreed
2.	Students aptitude towards subjects enhance proper subjects selections in secondary schools	2.70	0.82	Agreed	2.60	0.81	Agreed
3	Students attitude will help to enhance subjects selection in secondary schools	2.70	0.82	Agreed	2.60	0.81	Agreed
4.	Realities of the students situation or family background is counselling tip in enhancing subjects selection in secondary schools	3.10	0.88	Agreed	2.50	0.79	Agreed
Grand Mean		2.79	0.84		2.74	0.83	

Source: *Survey Data 2020*

The analysis in table 4 showed that the respondents agreed that students' level of intelligence is a tip by the counsellor that enhance students' proper career choice or subject selection in secondary schools. The table also indicated that the respondents agreed the point that students' aptitude towards subjects enhance proper subjects' selections in secondary schools. It was still observed from the table that the respondents agreed the fact that students attitude will help to enhance subjects selection in secondary schools in rivers state. Also revealed from the table is that the respondents agreed the view that realities of the students situation or farm background is counselling tip that enhance subject selection in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: *How does family background affect the subject combination of students in secondary schools in Rivers State?*

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviation Analysis on Family Background on Students Subject Combination in Secondary Schools in Rivers State

S/N	ITEMS	Counsellors (N=40)			Students (N=504)		
		Mean \bar{x}	SD	Remark	Mean \bar{x}	SD	Remark
13.	Students natural gifts or inborn potentials are considered in choosing suitable career in secondary schools	2.50	0.79	Agreed	3.15	0.89	Agreed
14.	Economic factor of the students is also consider for choosing suitable career by counsellor in secondary schools	2.65	0.81	Agreed	2.99	0.85	Agreed
15	The career social factor like values and respect are considered when choosing suitable career in choosing schools	3.10	0.88	Agreed	2.60	0.81	Agreed
16.	Students self factor like interest is also considered in choosing suitable career in secondary schools	2.70	0.82	Agreed	2.80	0.84	Agreed
Grand Mean		2.74	0.83		2.86	0.85	

Source: *Survey Data 2020*

The data analysis in Table 6 reveals that the respondents agreed on the view that student's natural gifts or inborn potentials are considered in choosing suitable career in secondary schools. The table also indicates that the respondents agreed the point that economic factor of the students (family) is also considered for choosing suitable career by counsellor in secondary schools in Rivers State. It was still observed from the table that the respondents agreed the fact that the career social factor like values and respect are considered when choosing suitable career in second any schools. Also shown in the table is that the respondents agreed to the view that students self factor like personal interest is also considered when choosing suitable career in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Test of Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of parental pressure on students' subject combination in secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 3: z-test Analysis of the Significant Difference in the Mean Rating of Peer group Pressure on Students Subject Combination in Secondary Schools in Rivers State

Variables/Status	No. of Respondents	Mean \bar{x}	SD	z-cal	z-crit	Level	Decision
School Counsellors	40	2.79	0.84	0.83	1.96	0.05	Accepted
Students	504	2.74	0.83				

Analysis in Table 8 indicates that the z-cal of 0.83 is smaller than the z-crit of 1.96. Therefore, the calculates z-ratio is not statistically significant at a 0.05 level of significant since it is smaller than the given critical values of z-ratio. Therefore, the hypothesis z is thus accepted and the conclusion is that no significant difference exists in the mean rating of peer group pressure on students' subject combination in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of family background on students' subject combination in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 4: z-test Analysis of the Significant Difference in the Mean Rating of Family Background on Students Subject Combination in Secondary Schools in Rivers State.

Variables/Status	No. of Respondents	Mean \bar{x}	SD	z-cal	z-crit	Level	Decision
School Counselors	40	2.74	0.83	0.22	1.96	0.05	Accepted
Students	504	2.86	0.85				

Analysis in table 10 revealed that the z-cal of 0.22 is smaller than the z-crit of 1.96. So, the calculated z-ratio is not statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance since it is smaller than the given critical value of z-ratio. So, the hypothesis 4 is thus accepted and the conclusion is that no significant exist in the mean rating of family background on students subject combination in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Summary of Major Findings

The main aim of this study is to investigate the therapeutic effects of counseling in the selection of subject combination among secondary school Students in Rivers State.

To achieve the aim of the study two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The independent variables used for the study were peer group pressure and family background, while the dependent variables were selection of subject combination.

Theoretical framework examined Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy and system self-theory, conceptual framework under the following sub headings were reviewed, the concept of career/subject selection, challenges of guidance and counseling units in Nigeria Secondary Schools Negative attitudes towards counseling.

The study utilize the descriptive design using a sample size of 40 counselors and 504 students. Stratified random sampling technique was used to draw the schools in Port-Harcourt Local Government Area in Rivers State. The instrument used for data collection was developed by the researcher and named Therapy Effect of Counseling in the Selection of Subject Combination Questionnaire (TECSSCQ). The face and content validity of the instrument was established by experts in the department of educational psychology Guidance and counseling and measurement and evaluation experts from the universities of Port-Harcourt and Rivers State university and also the research supervisor where its reliability was estimated through test re-test method for a measure of stability scores obtained were subjected to the person produce moment correlation test and it yielded a co-efficient value of 'r' 0.86.1. The test was administered to 40

counselors and 504 SS2 students in the selected schools. The data obtained from the instrument were collated and analyzed and null hypotheses. Based on the data analysis the following results were contained, peer group pressure and family background all were found to affect the selection of subject combination among secondary school students. These were statistically proven to be significant using the z-test statistical tool.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study showed that peer group pressure influence students selection of subject combination in secondary schools. This view in line with Tambahial (2015), who observed that interest intelligence aptitude, ability, personality, realities of our situation or family background. Students' academic performance and one's working environment are the tips that helps students in making proper career choice or development.

The study also showed that the students' family background has great influence in the selection of subject combination in secondary schools in Rivers State. This findings is in collaboration with George (2017), who mentioned trait factor, self-factor, resources factor, economic factor and social factors as basic to be considered for choosing a suitable career.

CONCLUSION

From the discussions of findings so far, it could be concluded that, Nigeria secondary school curriculum is mostly restructured in such a way that it needs a professional intervention of guidance and counselor for students to be properly and adequately guided to select subject that fit their aptitude, interest and capability. However, it is noted that secondary schools are lacking functional guidance and counseling units and services where they have, they are not being regarded by the school management and government in general. Therefore, for these students to make excellent choices and develop their career effectively, guidance and counseling services are imperative.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusion, the study recommends the following that:

1. School management through the secondary school counselors should always address the challenges facing secondary schools students in subjects selection hence these challenges could hinder the students from making a suitable choice.
2. Government should organize enlightenment campaign for the school counselors and the students in Rivers State on the counseling tips that enhanced proper career development in secondary schools.

REFERENCES

- Abubaka, C., Zaliha, I. A., & Mohammed, A. (2018). *Vocational Guidance and Counselling in Nigeria*. Unpublished Monograph: University of Lagos.
- Baridam, N. (2005). A sample study of Nigeria adolescents' academic and occupational Aspiration. *West African Journal of Educational and Vocational Measurement*, 14(2) 25-39.
- Dweck, J.C. (2010). School Education and occupational choice: social psychological Research in Nigerian International Secondary School, *West African Journal of Education*, 14(3), 123-122.
- Ezekweschi, A. (2016). Impact of school subjects on choice of occupation and profession: *West African Journal of Education*, 17(6) 105-119.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). *National Policy on Education*. 4th edition. Yaba: NERDC Press.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013). *National Policy on Education*. Yaba: NERDC Press
- Focus Counselling and Educational Consultancy Services (2013). *Choice of subjects and choice of career made easy for youth*. Ibadan: Focus counselling Co.
- George, C.W.C (2008). Counsellor preparation and His Functions in Nigeria Education system paper presented on 23rd November, 1995 at one day seminar on Counseling and Guidance organized by the child guidance clinic, Lagos State Ministry of Education.

- George, I. N. (2008). Towards realistic occupational choice: *Guidance and Counseling*. An information Handbook for Students, Teachers, Parents and Professional helpers Enugu, Academic printing press.
- Hayes, J. and Hopson. B. (2010). Career Guidance: The role of the school in vocational development.
- Holland, J.L. (2000). A theory of vocational choice. *Journal of Counselling psychology* 6(1), 35-45.
- Kolo, F. D. (2010). Guidance and counselling in perspective. Zaria: Stevano printing press Zaria.
- Kutara, B.I. (2017). Occupational choice: An approach to a General Theory. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Laosebikan, S. (2009). On the resistance of principals and teachers to the introduction of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Oyo State. *Cousellor*, 3(1 & 2) 57- 63.
- Makinde, D.S. (2010). Psychological Guidance of the school child. Boston: Allyn and Bacon Inc.
- Makinde, D.S. (2010). Counselling: Philosophy, theory and practice. Boaston: Allyn and Bacon Inc.
- Melvin, C. (2015). Career Information in counseling and teaching. Boston: Allyn and Bacon Inc.
- Multhauser, D. (2009). The psychology of occupations, New York: Harper.
- Okon, G.I. (1984). Choosing a vocation. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Schwarzeller, D.E. (2012). Self-concept in vocational development. In Super et al. Career Development: Self-concept theory. New York. College of Entrance Examination Board.
- Seligiman, M.S. (1980). Job aspiration of the youths and the Educational Provisions in Lagos. *West African Journal of Education*, 6(3), 41-49.
- Tambawal, M. U. (2015) Career Guidance. A training Manual for a 6-Day workshop on Guidance and Counselling for Para-counsellors in UHF Schools.
- Tambawal, M.U. (2009). Principles and techniques of guidance. Unpublished manuscripts, 1 Tsmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.
- Udegbo, S.O. (2007). *Psychology of the educational process*. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company.
- Wimmer, C. & Dommick, J. (2011). *Introduction to Research Methodology*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers.