

CREATING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGH GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

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Abstract

Guidance and counselling for creation of employment opportunities in the communities for secondary school students in Niger State. This was a cross-sectional and descriptive study among selected secondary school students in Niger State. Permission was obtained from appropriate school authorities; as well as consent from each participant. The Kolo's Career Awareness Rating Scale (CARS) which had been previously validated in the country was used to obtain the career information from the subjects. Analysis of the data was conducted using statistical software Minitab 16. A total of 1088 students were studied – of whom 50% were males and 50% females. The mean age was 15.9 years. Creation of employment opportunities in communities through Guidance and Counselling would help to minimize unemployment among Nigerian youths.

Keywords: *Guidance and Counselling, school, employment opportunities.*

For many Nigerian students, secondary school is a time of disengagement that fails to put them on a path to tertiary school and career success. It is therefore, necessary to ensure that young people graduate with skills and abilities that are aligned with the needs of a national and global economy.

Preparing young people for successful career and the abilities to earn a living requires a different educational experience than it did even a generation ago. Yet too many secondary school students are not meaningfully engaged or motivated in their academic experience while in school.

Many secondary school leavers lack exposure to learning what are related to work in school to tertiary school and careers – especially in the critically important fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Secondary schools must do more to engage, prepare and inspire career-ready students through career education under guidance and counselling programmes. Career education must be better aligned to employer and post secondary school needs.

Creating employment opportunities for secondary school students through school guidance and counselling programme would help to avert youth unemployment rate. The problem has persisted despite government's efforts to reverse the trend and make students acquire vocational and technical skills. Oliagba (2009) noted that there might be no jobs because of the changing demand in work environment, in terms of innovations and sophistication. He noted further that there is need to generate knowledge of demands of contemporary world of work through school guidance and counselling programmes.

Through guidance and counselling activities, appropriate instruments would be created to generate a lot of skills, innovations, ideas and knowledge of job available in the communities. Oliagba (2008) stated that career education would help create opportunities in which there are various developmental needs, and the one that is in dire need of critical mass of persons with an entrepreneur skills and creativity and recognizing self-service or self-employment.

For this paper employment opportunity creation is the deliberate incorporation of educational activities and skill acquisition through school guidance and counselling programme. This programme will help students graduate develop skills, abilities and knowledge about employment opportunities relevant to the social economy of the nation.

Statement of Problem

The rates of unemployment among the youth have been traced to the educational orientation at the secondary school level. The educational curriculums were often unrelated to the job available in the communities at a particular period of time. There are no jobs because of the changing demands in terms of innovations and sophistication of modern time.

To avert the problem there would be need to create employment opportunities for secondary school students through well guided career education of school guidance and counselling programme.

Objectives

The objectives of this paper is to create guidance and counselling activities to enhance employment opportunities which include:

1. to create self-awareness of the students through test and non-test techniques.
2. to create employment awareness.
3. to create awareness of personal attitude and appreciations as related to employment opportunities.
4. to teach decision making skills.
5. to provide educational requirement for various career.
6. to create economic and skills awareness.

Hypotheses

The following were the null hypotheses formulated:

1. There is no significant difference between male and female secondary school students in the employment opportunities awareness.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female secondary school students in their employment creation awareness.

Methodology

The method adopted for this study includes: study design, population of the study, sample size and sampling procedure, instrument for data collection, validity and reliability of the study instruments, method of data collection and method of data analysis of hypotheses.

Study Design

The design adopted thus was descriptive survey. Kassin, Fein and Markus (2008) described the descriptive survey design as an obvious way of testing ideas about people. It records how frequently or how typically people, think, feel, or behave in particular ways. This design can be used to test the respondents' self-awareness, career awareness, attitude and appreciation, decision making skills; educational awareness and skill awareness. All these components are directed towards the main goal of career awareness for positive attitude towards self, others and career among secondary school students (Kolo, 2002).

Study Setting

The study was carried out in Minna, Niger State capital. Permission to carry out the study was obtained from the Niger State Secondary School Board as well as from the authority of each of the secondary schools used.

Population of the Study

The target population of this study was the secondary school students in Minna Metropolis, Niger State capital.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

A total of ten out of the 25 secondary schools were selected for study using stratified sampling techniques. The schools were first stratified into two groups of public and private schools. Seven public schools and three privately owned ones were randomly selected to make a total of ten schools for the study. From each of these selected schools for the study, simple random sampling was used to select the number of subjects. The sample size required as a function of population size and desired accuracy (within 3%) at 95% confidence level was considered. The study was sampled from a population of 602,431 secondary school students at 95% confidence level and

within 3% of the true percentage in the population. Only 1088 secondary school students were utilized for this study.

Instrumentation

The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire, Career Awareness Rating Scale (CARS) developed by Kolo, F.D. CARS is a self reporting inventory and a diagnostic tool which can help identify level of the respondent employment/career awareness and preparedness. The component problem area can be diagnosed and given assistance in terms of counselling.

The above stated instrument was modified and adopted for the study. Section 'A' were items that solicited for bio-data. Section 'B' was the main scale that measures the career awareness of the respondents. There were twenty items in all. Four response spaces number 1 – 4. Section 'C' of the questionnaire was for official use only.

Data Collection Procedure

Copies of the questionnaire were administered and collected the same day on the spot of administration from the respondents. Different dates were schedule for the administration of the questionnaire to the respondents in each of the schools.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using statistical software Minitab 16. Both descriptive inferential statistics were used; Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was considered for the analysis of the data to enable the researcher test for statistical significant difference in the response of variable.

Data Analysis

Hypotheses I

There is no significant difference between male and female students in their employment opportunities awareness.

Table 1

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Response versus employment opportunities awareness schools and Gender.

Source of variation	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Questions	6	46968	7828	6.89	0.000
Schools	3	14554	4851	4.27	0.000
Gender	1	825	825	0.73	0.398
Error	45	51091	1135		
Total	55	113439			

S = 33.6953 R-sq = 54.96% R-sq(adj) = 44.95%

From table 1, since the P-value = 0.010 is less than 5% significant level, there was enough statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis and concluded that there was mean statistical significant difference between the school on employment opportunities awareness. Also the P-value = 0.398 was greater than 5% significant level. There was significant difference between male and female response on the employment opportunities awareness; the implication was that in both gender the employment opportunities awareness were applicable. The association $R^2 = 54.96\%$ was average for the analysis of the employment opportunities awareness and the schools.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between male and female students in their employment creation awareness.

Table 2

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Response versus employment creation awareness responses by schools and gender

Source of variation	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Questions	5	4546.9	909.4	0.92	0.476
Schools	3	3323.7	11076.9	11.26	0.000
Gender	1	776.0	776.0	0.79	0.380
Error	38	37387.9			
Total	47	75941.5			

S = 31.3670 R-sq = 54.77% R-sq(adj) = 39.11%

From table 2, the P-value = 0.000 was less than 5% significant level, there was enough statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there was statistical mean significant difference between the schools in employment creation awareness. Also the P-value = 0.380 was greater than 5% significant level. The implication was that employment creation awareness were applicable to the schools in respect of gender. The association $R^2 = 5077\%$ was above average in association with employment creation and the schools.

Discussion

The process of creating a successful career opportunities starts with the following steps recommended by Nwoye (1990).

1. Getting to know the self: The self includes characteristics, backgrounds, abilities, interest, weaknesses and values of the client.
2. Getting to know the different career options available in the community. This involves getting acquainted with materials such as dictionary of occupational titles, sources on careers etc.
3. Showing the students possible places in the occupational world where the student(s) abilities and interests can find such career opportunity.
4. Helping the student(s) choose within the options provided, and to take a decision within the alternatives available.

Recommendations

Career opportunities should be created in secondary schools through functional school guidance services.

Guidance services should be provided in the school after the needs assessment of the students has been conducted.

Career awareness should be created in the school through activities and programmes such as career day/week and career exhibition.

The school counsellor should prepare career album and revise annually as innovation of career prospect comes up.

Career awareness for self employment and reliance should be encouraged.

Conclusion

Creating employment opportunities for secondary school students would prepare young people for successful career endeavour. Career education should be emphasized and career activities that would expose the young people to the world of job should be fostered.

Career education can help an individual develop the knowledge and skills needed to choose and pursue career appropriately.

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