

A Survey of the Role of Vocational Guidance Counsellors in Entrepreneurship Education in a Developing Economy

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Abstract

The study was designed to investigate the role of Vocational Guidance Counsellors in promoting student's entrepreneurship development in a developing economy. This study focused on secondary schools students in Oredo Local Government area of Edo state, Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study, while purposive sampling technique was used to select eighty senior secondary school students from eight schools with professional Guidance counsellors. The question the study attempted to answer is to ascertain the extent to which school counsellors' impact on students' entrepreneurship development through counselling services. A 10-item self-designed instrument titled 'Counsellor's role in promoting Entrepreneurship development' was used for data collection. This instrument was validated by experts in measurement and evaluation and a reliability coefficient value of 0.75 was obtained. Data generated from this study were analysed using frequency count and percentages. The findings of the study revealed that school counsellors were deficient in promoting entrepreneurship development of secondary school students through the following counselling services: orientation and information services and also in the organization of entrepreneurship workshop, excursion and career day programmes. Based on these findings, it was recommended, among others, that, the school Guidance Counsellors should be reoriented to drill into their repertoire of professional orientation, a high dosage of entrepreneurship protocols, knowledge and skills. The school heads should be required to provide support for the school counselling programmes, by education authorities.

Keywords: role, vocational guidance, entrepreneurship, development

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1. Introduction

In a developing economy which Nigeria typifies, there is the endemic problem of unemployment and high rate of poverty. Many school leavers at all levels have no jobs as Government which has constituted the main source of employment is unable to cope. This situation is made worse by the ever growing population. Aligning with the above statement, Onongha (2015) asserted that the number of unemployed youths, have been on the increase and hence, resulting in high rate of poverty in Nigeria. She further stated that higher education policy failed to address the issue of unemployment at the tertiary education level on time because it largely produces job seekers more than job creators. The education for long policy only focused on the production of scientists and technologists with less attention on promoting self-employment. The lack of entrepreneurial education is said to result in gross unemployment.

In recent times however, in recognition of the relevance of entrepreneurship education, Nigerian Secondary Schools and Universities in their curricula, now offer entrepreneurial education, which is however, yet to significantly change the unemployment situation as the rate of unemployment continues to increase. According to the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (2018), unemployment rate measures the number of people actively looking for a job as a percentage of the labour force. In 2016, unemployed persons constituted 13.9 percent. In 2017, it rose to 14.2 percent; while in 2018, it further rose to 23.10 percent.

Tambawal and Abdulkarim (2016) asserted that many youths of various level of education and those who have not received formal education, lack entrepreneurial skill that could be deployed to produce and market goods and services.

Utoware & Kehinde (2012) noted that eighty percent of graduates with qualification for jobs in Nigeria are unemployed. This could partly be due to unawareness of entrepreneurship opportunities.

In this scenario, the orientation of the people must change from being seekers of job to job creators. Aligning with the above point, Utoware & Kehinde (2012) opined that a shift from general education to entrepreneurship education has become necessary, particularly for the youth in the society. Entrepreneurship simply defined is the means of creating wealth through rendering of services that meet social needs. (Onojetah & Utoware, 2012).

In order to facilitate entrepreneurship development in any society, it is important that prospective youths are enabled to recognize opportunities as well as their innate talent in addition to acquiring the cognate skills and knowledge to take productive advantage of opportunities.

The main goal of Entrepreneurship Education as stipulated by Onongha (2015) is to promote the interest and abilities of the youths to see and exploit opportunities for wealth and job creation through entrepreneurship. Vocational Guidance Counselling is the means and process of enabling individuals recognize their entrepreneurial talents and guide them to match these talents with requisite skills (Ima-Osagie & Oduh, 2014). The vocational counsellor is a trained and knowledgeable professional well positioned to undertake this role.

2. Problem of the study

The above being the case, the problem of this study is predicated on the need to provide empirically reliable and dependable information about the extent to which school counsellors play their core professional duties in the entrepreneurship education development of students in public secondary schools in Oredo Local Government of Edo State, Nigeria, through counselling programmes.

3. Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to ascertain the participatory role of the school counsellors' in the promotion of entrepreneurship development in secondary schools of Edo state, Nigeria.

4. Research questions

The research question raised to guide the study is raised as follows:

To what extent do school counsellors impact on students' entrepreneurship development through counselling services?

5. Literature review

The literature was reviewed under the following sub-headings:

- i. The meaning and nature of entrepreneurship education.
- ii. The role of vocational guidance counsellor in entrepreneurship development.

6. The Meaning and Nature of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship Education could be viewed as activities geared towards the acquisition of various business knowledge and skills. Through entrepreneurship education, learners are exposed to knowledge, development and vocational skills for enhanced employability and wealth creation. Entrepreneurship education has been variedly defined by scholars. Entrepreneurship education is viewed by Akpan & Uwah (2014) as a process of getting involved in profitable business enterprises. In the same vein, Tambawal & Abdulkarim (2016) stated that entrepreneurship education is education for acquisition of relevant skills both for self-employment and productivity and self-reliance of citizens. Furthermore, Adenipekun (2004), defines entrepreneurship education as a means of helping learners to become successful business men and women through integrated and structural learning opportunities. He further pointed out that it is an educational learning experience directed towards helping young learners to develop skills, competences, understanding and attributes that would enable them to identify, create, initiate and successfully manage personal, community, business and work opportunities including working for themselves. Oduma (2007) opined that entrepreneurship education includes knowledge in technical, commercial and occupational skills which make the individuals competent towards contributing greatly to national development through the acquisition of fundamental business skills. Aminu (2009) sees Entrepreneurship Education as the process of imparting knowledge and teaching skills to potential entrepreneurs on relatively small scale business for onward advancement of the business. For Aminu, the goal of Entrepreneurship Education is to teach young people to see business opportunities, ideas and to promptly act on them so as to take advantage over others.

Osula (2009) asserted that entrepreneurship education is the acquisition of ability to set up a business enterprise different from being employed. He further explained that the entrepreneurship education gives the individual a self-dependent disposition and a drive to create wealth, involves acquisition of skills, ideas and managerial abilities necessary for self-reliance. Entrepreneurship education is the total learning experience offered in our educational system which equips the learners with the skills, ideas, attitudes to make mature judgment and to be in position to create goods and services (Arunwa, 2004).

In summary, from the foregoing, entrepreneurship education is a process geared towards achieving the following objectives: (i) development of knowledge about the varieties of enterprises through which business opportunities can be exploited to meet social needs, create wealth and employment generation. (ii) acquire the specific skills and knowledge about a particular vocation suitable for the individuals' engagement in accordance with his talents and interests. (iii) develop capacity to seek venture capital for the establishment of one's own business in a given social environment and (iv) acquire knowledge and skill about business management and critical success factors.

Entrepreneurship education programme could for example, focus on: (a) catering services involving

acquiring capacity to prepare different menus or dishes involving African and foreign dishes, confectionaries, bread making, cake baking etc, that are usually of great value in social events. (b) furniture making and basket weaving. (c) fashion design and tailoring (d) soap making (e) hair styling (f) farming e.g. fish farming, poultry, animal husbandry and arable crops (g) auto mechanic and (h) online sales and business opportunities.

The duration of time for each of these activities could vary from nine months to two years as the case may be, during which the apprentice entrepreneur is attached for tutelage by an expert in the chosen field.

7. The Role of Vocational Guidance Counsellor in Entrepreneurship Development

The vocational Guidance Counsellor has many vital roles to play in assisting youths/students to develop entrepreneurship skills and to be self-relevant. Entrepreneurship Education Counselling is the process of applying Vocational Counselling Principles. It is highly necessary in any empowerment programme at all levels. The whole purpose of empowerment may be jeopardized without entrepreneurship guidance and counselling. In support of this position, Eduwen (2015) remarked that it is important to counsel the would-be entrepreneur on how to manage entrepreneurial resources at their disposal, to charge them to develop an entrepreneurial mindset and to give them orientation to uncover the skills and the dynamics of entrepreneurship. As Entrepreneurship Education is being introduced in senior secondary education curriculum, the counsellor has a vantage position to make sure that the concept of Entrepreneurship Education is explained in schools and promoted as a career opportunity of youth. The roles of the counsellor as outlined by Egbochuku (2008), include but not limited to the following.

- a. **Orientation Services:** A professional counsellor would provide orientation for students on the need to acquire entrepreneurship mind-set and skills in order to be productive and self-reliant. They should be enlightened on the issue of unemployment and the consequences. When students are oriented and prepared to help themselves through self-employment, it reduces tension and anxiety about labour market. This orientation service would assist students to make appropriate decisions on wealth creation and self-reliance.
- b. **Counselling Services:** This is a process of promoting self-development through personal interactive processes between the counsellor and the individual or group. The essence of this service is to assist the individuals to identify their areas of strengths and weaknesses, which make them unique individuals. This will help the students have an understanding of their selves and in so doing, reduce the confusion in their thoughts and feelings.
- c. **Placement Services:** The counsellor assists the students to direct their interest, abilities and talents in entrepreneurial skills into areas where it is most needed for optimal productivity. With placement services, there will be production of graduates with entrepreneurial knowledge and skills for effective running of businesses of their interest and choice.
- d. **Information Services:** This is a process of providing information to students on the different entrepreneurial skills. Information is the ingredient for decision making. The quality of information provided by the counsellor determines the quality of decision students make in job creation. Information services could be made available to students, to guide them and consequently help them develop the needed entrepreneurship culture for sustainability after school.
- e. **Follow-Up Services:** The counsellor provides this service in order to follow up or monitor the progress of students in their job places. This can be applied to individuals who are self-employed in order to ascertain the progress so far made and to enable further decision if need be.
- f. **Research Services:** Counsellors embark on researches in order to determine better ways of solving problems, and also to determine what products are people willing to pay for or fast moving products in the market. Their findings can be communicated to students.
- g. **Excursion Programmes:** Counsellors should take students to private Enterprise of small and medium scale categories to see first-hand entrepreneurship practices in real life situations. This will enable students have the opportunity to observe and interact with successful business men and women in their environment.
- h. **Career day Event:** The counsellor assists to organize career day event where resource persons in various fields are invited to give a talk in their areas of expertise to students. Business experts are made to talk on different entrepreneurial skill for the purpose of creating jobs for self-employment.
- i. **Teachers Orientation:** The counsellor with the collaboration of school heads should re-orientate teachers of different subject to design lessons towards entrepreneurship education. The present unemployment situation is likely to change when entrepreneurship skill training is integrated with academic and vocational skill training.
- j. **Organization of Vocational Guidance Workshop:** Vocational Guidance workshops are to be occasionally organized by the professional Guidance Counsellors to sensitize youths for entrepreneurship opportunities and enable them to acquire different entrepreneurial skills useful in

production of goods and services for sustenance after school.

It is conceivable that vocational guidance and counselling services as presented are significantly connected to the process of manpower development through the eradication of youth unemployment and gainful self-employment.

8. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised all senior secondary school students in Oredo local government area of Edo state, Nigeria. The sample for this study is drawn using purposive sampling technique to select students from schools with professional school counsellors as some of the schools do not have professional counsellor (Ojeme, 2010). Eight schools were selected for the study, out of which the first ten students, who volunteered to participate, were taken from each of the eight schools, bringing the number of students who participated to eighty.

An instrument titled ‘Counsellors’ role in promoting entrepreneurship development’ was used to obtain data from students. The instrument, which consists of ten items on the subject matter, was validated by two experts in measurement and evaluation. The test retest method of establishing reliability was used to establish its reliability and co-efficient value of 0.75 was obtained.

The instrument was personally administered to the respondents to enable one hundred per-cent response rate. The data generated from the study were analysed using frequency counts and percentage. The cluster percentage was also obtained.

9. Results

The results of the study were based on the data obtained through responses to the research question.

Research question one: to what extent do school counsellors’ impact on students’ entrepreneurship development through counselling services?

Table I: Impact of school counsellors’ entrepreneurship development of students.

N= 80

s/n		Always Frequency %	Seldom Frequency %	Not at all Frequency %
1	Orientation service My school counsellor organizes orientation for students on entrepreneurship career choice development	14 17.5	12 15.0	54 67.5
2	I am encouraged by my school counsellors’ orientation to have a business mind-set	19 11.25	12 15.0	59 73.75
	Cluster percentage	14.38	15	70.63
3	Information service My school counsellor shares information on business opportunities with students	22 27.5	20 25	38 47.5
4	I get information from my school counsellor on small scale business opportunities	16 20	22 27.5	42 52.5
	Cluster percentage	23.75	26.25	50
5	Organization of entrepreneurship My school counsellor organizes workshop for students on different entrepreneurship skills	11 13.75	23 28.75	46 57.5
6	Resource persons talk to us during the workshop for students on entrepreneurship skills	5 6.25	26 32.5	49 61.25
	Cluster percentage	10	30.63	59.38
7	Entrepreneurship excursion programmes My school counsellor has taken me on excursion to business places of interest to me	16 20	7 8.75	57 71.25
8	My school counsellor encourages students’ excursion to business places on individual basis	9 11.25	12 15	59 73.75
	Cluster percentage	15.63	11.88	72.5
9	Organization of career day event Career day event is organized by my school counsellor for students	32 40	04 05	44 55
10	Resource persons come to give talk to students on different business opportunities on career day	29 36.25	13 16.25	38 47.5
	Cluster percentage	38.13	10.63	51.25

A critical examination of Table 1, revealed that majority of the respondents indicated the option of ‘Not At All’ in orientation service, information service and in the organizations of programme and career day event. While the option of ‘seldom’ follows and the least option was ‘Always’. The researcher concluded that school counsellors are deficient in their roles in promoting entrepreneurship development of students in the school studied, from the responses of the students as evident in the Table.

Table II: Summative Cluster Percentage of Counsellors’ Role

s/n	Counsellors’ role	Always	Seldom	Not at all
1	Orientation service	14.38	15	70.63
2	Information service	23.75	26.25	50
3	Organizing entrepreneurship workshop	10	30.63	59.38
4	Excursion programme	15.63	11.88	72.5
5	Organization of career day event	38.13	10.63	51.25
	Cluster percentage	20.38	18.88	60.75

10. Discussion of findings

Overall, this study has brought out the reality of the deficit role of school counsellors studied on entrepreneurship development of students as evident in the grand total cluster percentage of 60.75 for ‘Not At All’ option as against 20.38 for the option of ‘Always’. The findings of this study align with the views of Tambawal and Abdulkarim (2016), who asserted that youths lack enough knowledge of entrepreneurship skills that could be deployed to produce goods and services. Also, the findings corroborate the perspectives of Agboola and Abikwi (2014), who stated that there is a seeming lack of entrepreneurship education among students. In the same vein, aligning with the findings of this study, Utoware and Kehinde (2012), opined that many graduates with qualification for jobs are unemployed, possibly due to their unawareness of entrepreneurship opportunities. The finding was surprising and not expected. Considering the high level of unemployment rate in Nigeria, one would have expected that the school counsellors regularly and effectively engage students and sensitize them on the need for self-employment through acquiring diversity of business skills, especially at this time of economic meltdown.

This is quite worrisome as the National Policy on Education (2013) edition, emphasizes the essence of entrepreneurship development as a means of curbing unemployment of youths in Nigeria. Prior to this time, according to Ima-osagie and Oduh (2014), the then minister of education, Prof. Ruqayyat Ahmed Rufai, formally launched and presented to the public, on 14th March, 2011, the new senior secondary school education curriculum (SSCE) which emphasized entrepreneurship development of students. The question that comes to mind is, why are school counsellors’ deficit in facilitating entrepreneurship development of students’ inspite of the relevance and emphasis attached to it.

Furthermore, the data raised the suspicion that the school counsellors themselves may be lacking in the practical skills of entrepreneurship. The deficit could also be due to the issue of funding of counselling programmes as well as lack of support and cooperation from the school heads. Studies by (Nwamuo and Ugwegbulam, 2011 and Ojeme, 2010), have revealed that non-administrative support for school counsellors hinders the effective implementation of guidance programmes in the school system. A cordial working relationship between school heads and school counsellors is a major ingredient for boosting performance of counsellors in schools (Ponec and Brock, (2000) and O’connor (2002). It has been further established that some school heads assign non-counselling roles to school counsellors’ in addition to their core counselling duties. As stated by Bukoye (2012), school principals assign duties to counsellors, according to their schools’ needs. She stated further that they may be asked to play the role of vice principals, to teach as full time teachers, act as school clerk or cashier etc. using school counsellors to perform clerical duties would be a distraction from their conduct of professional counselling roles. It is important to note, that, counselling services could only be fulfilled through efficient and effective implementation of guidance and counselling programmes in the school system.

Whatever may be the source of the deficit, all stakeholders must work to boost the improvement of entrepreneurship development of students in schools. The school heads must provide all the necessary ingredients to facilitate entrepreneurship education. While there is an urgent need to re-orientate the school counsellors to drill into their repertoire of professional orientation, high dosage of entrepreneurship protocols, knowledge and skills.

11. Conclusion

It is evident from the findings of this study that school counsellors are ineffective in their roles towards promoting entrepreneurship development of students through counselling services in the following programmes: orientation, provision of entrepreneurship opportunities information, organization of entrepreneurship workshops, excursion and career day event.

12. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study.

- 1) School counsellors must become champions of entrepreneurship education in their schools and the larger society by (i) policy advocacy (ii) awareness creation (iii) operationalization of entrepreneurship excursion, career day and orientation programmes in schools.
- 2) School counsellors must acquire entrepreneurship and vocational skills as part of clinical competences for effective participation in entrepreneurship development of students in schools.
- 3) The school heads should provide enabling environment with vision statements, policies and work tools to propel the school counsellors to properly execute their legitimate professional roles in the schools.
- 4) School principals should be dissuaded from using their position to assign non-counselling duties to counsellor, so as to avoid distraction from their core duties.
- 5) School counsellors should establish a collaborative working relationship with their school principals, in order to win their support for counselling programmes. All counsellors in schools must be supervised and evaluated in terms of their performance of the aforementioned roles.
- 6) Continuous research on this subject matter is necessary to build more knowledge on the issues raised in this study.

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