

**EFFECTIVE CAREER COUNSELLING AMONG IN-SCHOOL
ADOLESCENTS AS CORRELATE OF CAREER
ADJUSTMENT AND YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP
AWARENESS IN IMO STATE**

Chijioke Ephraim Ohuakanwa Ph.D

Department of Educational Foundations and Counselling, Imo State University, Owerri,
Nigeria

chijiokeohuakanwa@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: The study investigated the correlation or relationship among effective career counselling, career adjustment and youth entrepreneurship awareness of in-school adolescents in secondary institutions in Imo State. Five research questions were formulated, and three hypotheses postulated. The sample was made up of three hundred SS3 in-school adolescents (students) drawn from the three senatorial zones of Imo State, using random sampling technique. Data were collected using the researcher's designed questionnaire entitled "Career Counselling, Career Adjustment and Youth Entrepreneurship Awareness Scale". The instrument was validated by five experts to ensure validity in the area of content, simplicity and clarity of language. The reliability was $r=0.83$. Data analysis adopted the mean scores and standard deviation in answering research questions and Pearson Product Moment Coefficient was used to establish the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variables at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed low level of effective career counselling (mean = 2.30 and SD = 1.19) and youth entrepreneurship awareness (mean = 2.25 and SD = 1.19). However, the finding showed that level of career adjustment is moderate (mean = 2.74 and SD = 1.06). Further, the findings revealed positive relationship between the independent variable (effective career counselling) ($r=0.783$ $p < 0.05$) and ($r = 0.442$ $p < 0.05$) to career adjustment and entrepreneurship awareness. This means that career counselling can enhance the dependent variables. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that functional counselling units should be established in schools and qualified counsellors should be engaged in the schools. These would make career counselling worthwhile and go a long way to making youth empowerment and entrepreneurship achievable in Nigeria, including Imo State.

Keywords: Effective Career Counselling, Career Adjustment, Youth and Entrepreneurship Awareness.

INTRODUCTION

The most awful challenge facing Nigeria today as perceived by many scholars is youth unemployment. Youth unemployment in the perception and views of many Nigerians is fast becoming pandemic. Education is said to be the weapon for liberation from ignorance, poverty, disease and primitivism; through education, they can realize themselves (youths). However, and very unfortunately, Nigerian youths are exposed to education and after a quality time expended in school pursuing education from primary to tertiary levels, they are confronted with a mighty monster called unemployment. The president of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari has on many occasions, nationally and internationally, publicly affirmed

that unemployment in Nigeria is worse than insurgency in the North Eastern zone of Nigeria. This is simply to express his level of worry for unemployment especially among teeming Nigerian youths. This is worst still in the face of the dwindling economy that Nigeria is going through now.

The transformation of education in Nigeria particularly and in Africa obviously is the key player to the solution to global challenges today. The phenomenon of unemployment has over the years become an insurmountable threat that many people think that the country's education system needs to be overhauled and transformed for a better brand, the education brand that will turn around people that would be employable at the end especially self-oriented employment. On this, the National Policy Document on Education (FRN,2013) was very clear, it states in 1977, prominent Nigerians from many fields of endeavour including market men and women, those from industries and others came together and brainstormed on the type of education good for this country Nigeria. At the end, they came up with a widely accepted proposal of an education called the 6. 3.3.4 system of education the group of discussants and policy makers did not just conclude that the system was not the only problem, they also blamed the ability of people in schools and so proposed for career awareness of the youths in schools, so that they would be able to make vital choices to suit them regarding their abilities. Thus, they advocated for career counselling. Hence, the document of the national policy on education (FRN, 2013) had this to say "in view of the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects and in view of personality maladjustment among school children, career officers and counsellors will be appointed in post-primary institutions. Guidance and Counselling will also feature in teacher education programmes. In this way, guidance and counselling then, was introduced into the education system as career or vocational counselling, purely as a panacea to vocational or career needs of the youths and to provide the platform for sustaining the vocational enhancement of the young people for better employment empowerment. The overreaching question posed is: to what extent has the career counselling of students as enshrined in the Nigeria education policy document been invoked in the education of Nigerian youths in order to make them employable at the end of their school period?

Career counselling, in the context of this study, is the process of making the students come to the full realization of who they are in terms of their total potentialities, their abilities, their interests, strengths and weaknesses, what they can do and what they cannot do. Realizing that as individuals, they are variously unique and standing as individuals and in comparison, with other person, each individual has his or her own best calling for which an individual has comparative advantage over the other person. Career counselling has the singular objective of bringing out this uniqueness in the individual for him/her to be aware of self. In the opinion of Omeje (2002), career counselling is also seen as career education which is described as the development of the skill and knowledge through which individual students may fulfil their own unique needs with regard to the occupational choice, social responsibility, leisure time activity and personal development. Again, Omeje (2002), further maintains that career counselling could be described as career education or as the totality of experiences through which one learns about and prepares to encourage in work as part of him and or learning of life. Further, the author maintained that it could refer to the process of facilitating career development in all students by modifying in school educational experiences as well as experiences in the business industrial sector and the home. Nwamuo (2001), described career counselling in relation to the act of assisting an individual break open and become fully aware and then use his/her internal and external traits. These are his/her interests, abilities,

personality characteristics and his/her total potentialities, which when fully realized, would lead to the individual's maximum development of potentialities. The author holds that these would enable the individual to make a good career or vocational adjustment. The author further contends that career counselling or vocational guidance involves psychological processes which facilitate the actualization of the individual's self-awareness and social understanding (interest, abilities, strengths, weakness and personal characteristics) by the individuals. Accordingly, there is need for career counselling. To be effective enough, it has to make the necessary impact expected on the youths as far as vocational empowerment and entrepreneurship is concerned.

Effective career counselling entails what the researcher perceives as authentic career counselling. This is because career counselling can only be meaningful and purposeful if at the end of the day the client realizes his/her uniqueness in his/her choice of career. Effective career counselling makes the individual aware of 'self', the 'real self' (knowledge of strength and weaknesses), so, the question of 'who am I', what is the 'essence of my life'? are answered. Most Nigerian youngsters and other young people are suffering from the unemployment saga because they are not authentically prepared for employment or for entrepreneurship aspiration after school education. They are invariably made 'totally' unemployable 'abinitio', they lacked effective career counselling. They went through training which could not make them realise their authentic selves. In their opinion, Ekwe and Ohuakanwa (2016), maintain that majority of Nigerian youths and adults alike are quite unaware of who they are. In their view, the youths and adults lack self-awareness, having no accurate knowledge of their abilities, strength and weaknesses. Therefore, they found themselves in careers that are better described as false careers. These sorts of people would all through their lives have elusive career satisfaction and fulfilment. Hence, career adjustment will simply be illusive if an individual failed to receive effective career counselling in the process of career development.

Career adjustment in the perception of the researcher entails authentic career decision and choice which affords the individual steady progress and development in a chosen career; at the same time enhances or ensures immeasurable job satisfaction and fulfilment in a chosen career. An individual can only be adjusted in a chosen career when the decision and choice for the career was born out of the consideration for the criteria due to adequate knowledge and awareness of 'self', indeed, the 'real self' – the authentic self. Therefore, the individual is not swayed or ruled by just the fact that he/she is or has a means of living but he/she is living out a philosophy of life in a career that he/she is personalized. His/her adjustment in the career is due to the fact that everything about the individual – interest, ability, strength, the overall potential is the attraction for the career. The career is the individual's passion. Thus, the individual derives maximum satisfaction and fulfilment on the career. The career in which one is well adjusted, allows the individual a sort of uncommon joy, happiness, satisfaction that do not come simply because the career pays so fantastically well and as when due, not because also the career is very prestigious but that the individual is so passionate about the career and he/she is enthusiastically called to the career dictates. The career gives him/her optimum mental health. In the opinion of Nwamuo (2001) an individual is able to make sense out of his/her career when he/she by way of effective career counselling or vocational education is made to identify or realise his/her interest, abilities, personal traits and other characteristics together with their potential value and in such a way that these values are put into effective use in the work place, in which case the individual will make adequate career adjustment.

Experience and knowledge have shown that many of those who have shown high level of adjustment in their chosen careers demonstrate the ability of creative entrepreneurship and even in their youthful stage in life. Youth empowerment and entrepreneurship are considered quite separate or distinct but corollary in association. Entrepreneurship gives rise to youth empowerment thinking. Youth empowerment and entrepreneurship have been considered as the solution to the current unemployment dead-luck among the Nigerian youths.

Youth empowerment and entrepreneurship are twin concepts, inseparable as it were that go to show the creativity and ingenuity of individuals that put them on top of their lives' career, make them distinguished among their contemporaries and thus, achieve self-development as well as contribute to the development of the country generally. This will eliminate unemployment and make room for self-sustainability and sufficiency. This will, on the other hand, translate to national sufficiency and sustainability. In another sense, youth empowerment suggests repositioning and upliftment of the youth to meet societal challenges, to be able to take decisions on their own and cater for themselves through the medium of intellectual cultivation and skill acquisition, in return, promote national development. The necessary puzzle to solve is centred on the ways youths can be empowered in the society; and to this, several solutions are self-evident.

One and most important way youth empowerment can be achieved, and entrepreneurship encouraged, in the author's view is by ensuring that the education system in the country is completely turned around for a more qualitative, skilled/practical oriented education. In the view of the author, education should be as advocated for, in the national policy on education document (2013). It should be a lifelong brand of education. An ideal education should be one that will not encourage redundancy in the life of the individual at any point in time. It is a kind of education that will fit into the definition of education as a weapon which liberates the individual from ignorance, primitivism and poverty. This type of education would keep the educated individual cognitively, psychomotively, and affectively desirous of what to do with self and others to impact on society where he/she belongs. What this means is that the individual receives the kind of education that will make him/her hunger to be an achiever, who is self-dependent and self-reliant. This educated person will not irrationally have to postpone his/her birthday in order to remain on the job for life because he/she is afraid of retirement. This brand of educated person knows self, understands self, knows his/her potentialities and is mindful of his/her mission in life, always visionary. It is this kind of educated person that is open to empowerment and entrepreneurship. Thus, qualitative education is the bases for empowerment and entrepreneurship. However, even when there is provision for quality education in place, there is still need for proper career counselling in order to encourage proper career choice, adjustment and encourage entrepreneurship thinking. This will promote individuals' growth and development as well as community and national growth and development. It is against this background that the author sought to carry out this study.

Statement of the Problem

A lot has been said and written about reasons for the massive unemployment in the country. In a time of huge youth unemployment, as in the case in Nigeria of today, all accusing fingers are pointing to education as the major causative agent of youth unemployment. The reason being that education in all nations of the world is viewed as fixed solution to societal issues and as such expected to bring about massive change when things seem amiss in society. In

the case of Nigeria, there is a strong belief that the quality of Nigerian education is very porous and so makes no creative and utility impact on the young Nigeria school leavers. Many have argued that Nigerian education system has failed to produce graduates/school leavers who have the capacity and ability to match and generate solutions to society's problems. Rather, the education system only makes Nigerian young school leavers certificate carriers. Most school leavers do not have the capacity to be employable at all by any sector of the economy, thus, unemployment is soaring year after year. A lot of people have in their candid opinion suggested entrepreneurial training in school, which should be embraced by all students in school, no matter their calling or discipline. Some also have said 'school to land' by the way of embracing agricultural practices would be a way out of youth unemployment since they cannot be employed after school. However, all are speculations. Hence, there is need to investigate the impact of counselling in Nigerian schools at all levels bearing in mind the essence of its establishment in Nigerian schools. It is in this wise that the researcher has decided to carry out this study: effective career counselling among in-school adolescents as correlate of career adjustment and youth entrepreneurship awareness in Imo State.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of the study was to investigate effective career counselling as correlate of career adjustment and youth entrepreneurship awareness in Imo State. Specifically, the study sought to determine;

1. the level of career counselling among in-school adolescents in Imo State,
2. the level of career adjustment among in-school adolescents in Imo State,
3. the level of entrepreneurship awareness among in-school adolescents in Imo State

Research Question

The study was guided by the following research questions

1. What is the level of career counselling among in-school adolescents in Imo State?
2. What is the level of career adjustment among in-school adolescents in Imo State?
3. What is the level of youth entrepreneurship awareness among in-school adolescents in Imo State?

Research Hypotheses

The study was guided by the following research hypotheses, tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Ho₁. There is no significant correlation between the levels of career counselling and career adjustment among in-school adolescents in Imo State as measured by their responses on the instrument.

Ho₂. There is no significant correlation between the levels of career counselling and youth entrepreneurship awareness among in-school adolescents in Imo State as measured by their responses on the instrument.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a correlation research design. The study investigated effective career counselling as correlate of career adjustment and youth entrepreneurship awareness in Imo State.

The research population is all final year senior secondary school students (SS3) of the three senatorial zones of Imo State. The sample size for the study was made up of three hundred male and female students. The sample was realized using random sampling technique. The participants were randomly sampled from randomly selected schools in the three senatorial zones of Imo State.

Data were collected using the researcher's designed questionnaire entitled "Career Counselling, Career Adjustment and Youth Entrepreneurship Scale" (CCAYES). The instrument has two sections, A and B. Section A sought to elicit the biographic data (gender, name of school and age) of the respondents while section B contained items used to gather data on respondents' perception on the major variables investigated in the study. The item response format was a five – point scale of Never, Rarely, Occasionally, Often and Always. The instrument went through the scrutiny and corrections of five experts in order to achieve face validity, while its reliability was empirically ascertained by the test retest procedure using an eight- week time lag which yielded a coefficient of 0.83. three research questions and two hypotheses were posed for this study.

Data were analyzed using the mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions on how to determine the levels of effective career counselling, career adjustment and entrepreneurship awareness among in-school adolescents. Meanwhile Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient ® Statistic was used to test for the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance and to establish the relationship between the variables.

RESULTS

Research Question 1. What is the level of career counselling among in-school adolescents in Imo State?

Table 1: Mean and SD Analysis of in-school Adolescents' Career Counselling exposure in Imo State, indicating levels

S/N	Item Description	X	SD	Remark
1	I have been exposed to career counselling since in this school	1.95	1.02	L
2	I have benefited from wide information on career counselling	2.21	1.07	L
3	I have been equipped to make valid career decision	2.60	1.35	M
4	I understand my mental ability and can take career decision	2.64	1.22	M
5	The subjects I offer in school are due to career information I received	2.12	1.35	L
	Weighted Mean	2.30		L

Decision Rule: 3.50 – 5.00 high, 2.50 – 3.49 moderate, and 0.5 – 2.49 low (H: High level, M: Moderate level, and L: Low level)

The data analysis presented in table 1 above show the mean (X) and standard deviation (SD), indicating the level of career counselling experienced by the in-school adolescents in Imo State. Table 1 shows the overall mean score of 2.30 indicating that the students experienced low level of career counselling in secondary schools in Imo State. Looking at table 1, apart from items 3 and 4 with moderate levels of experience of career counselling as shown by their mean responses, 2.60 and 2.64 respectively, all other items in table 1 were rated low as their mean scores range between 0.5 and 2.49, indicating low career counselling service experienced by the in – school adolescents (secondary school students) in Imo State. The overall cluster mean score of (2.30) is a clear indication of this revelation.

Research Question 2. What is the level of career adjustment among in-school adolescents in Imo State?

Table 2: Mean and SD Analysis of in-School Adolescents Career Adjustment in Imo State, indicating level

S/N	Item Description	X	SD	Remark
1	I am deeply interested and attracted to the choice of my career	2.68	1.43	M
2	I am looking forward to realizing my career dream	3.09	1.39	M
3	I am confused to choose the subjects of study in school	2.46	1.32	L
4	All the subjects I am doing are relevant to my future	2.71	1.43	M
5	All the choice subjects I have made are burn out of my interest and ability	2.76	1.49	M
	Weighted Mean	2.74		M

Decision Rule: 3.50 – 5.00 high, 2.50 – 3.49 moderate, and 0.5 – 2.49 low (H: High level, M: Moderate level, and L: Low level)

The data in table 2 show the mean (X) and SD indicating the level of career adjustment among in-school adolescents in Imo State. From table 2, the overall mean score of 2,74 shows that the in-school adolescents experienced moderate level of career adjustment in Imo State. Observing table 2, apart from item3 with low level of career adjustment among in-school adolescents, indicated by the mean response score of 2.46, all other items in table 2 were rated moderate as their mean scores range between 2.50 and 3.49, indication moderate career adjustment on those items. However, the overall cluster mean score (2.74) indicate moderate career adjustment among in-school adolescents (secondary school students) in Imo State.

Research Question 3. What is the level of entrepreneurship awareness among in-school adolescents in Imo State?

Table 3: Mean and SD Analysis of Students Entrepreneurship Awareness in Imo State, Indicating Levels

S/N	Item Description	X	SD	Remark
1	I have a strong desire to become an employer of labour	2.83	1.74	M
2	I have a great deal of career entrepreneurship counselling in school	2.20	1.45	L
3	I know that without paid employment I can employ myself	2.81	1.74	M
4	I can establish myself with the knowledge of career counselling I got in school	1.72	1.21	L
5	I have a career direction after the career information on the career day I attended in school	1.78	1.25	L
	Weighted Mean	2.25		L

Decision Rule: 3.50 – 5.00 high, 2.50 – 3.49 moderate, and 0.5 – 2.49 low (H: High level, M: Moderate level, and L: Low level)

The data in table 3 present the mean and SD indicating level of entrepreneurship awareness among in-school adolescents in Imo State. From Table 3, the overall mean score of 2.25 shows that the in-school adolescents' have low level of entrepreneurship awareness in Imo State. Again, a look at Table 3, indicates that items 1 and 3 were rated moderate as shown by their mean scores of 2.83 and 2.81 respectively, other items in Table 3, were rated low as their mean scores range between 0.5 and 2.49, indicating low entrepreneurship awareness on those items. However, the overall cluster mean score of (2.25) indicates low entrepreneurship awareness through career counselling among in-school adolescents in Imo State.

Research Question 4/ Hypothesis 1

Ho1: there is no significant correlation between career counselling and career adjustment of in-school adolescent in Imo State

Table 4: Correlation Coefficient of Career Counselling and Career Adjustment of In-School Adolescents in Imo State

Variables	N	R	Sig. 2 – tailed	Remark
Career Counselling	300	.783	0.05	Rejected
Career Adjustment	300	.783	0.05	rejected

Significant at 0.05 level of probability

The results in Table 4 indicate that the correlation coefficient of career counselling and career adjustment is 0.783. Thus, there is a significant correlation between career counselling and career adjustment. This suggests that the higher the level of career counselling there is, the likelihood of better career adjustment among in-school adolescents. Finding indicates a significant positive relationship between career counselling and career adjustment of in-

school students. This is evidenced by the calculated r- coefficient of 0.783, which is significant at 0.01 level of probability and also significant at 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between career counselling and in-school adolescents' career adjustment is rejected as the relationship is significant.

Research Question 5/Ho2

Ho2: there is no significant correlation between career counselling and entrepreneurship awareness of in-school adolescents in Imo State

Table 5: Correlation Coefficient of Career Counselling and Entrepreneurship Awareness of In-School Adolescents in Imo State.

Variables	N	R	Sig. 2 - tailed	Remark
Career Counselling	300	.442	0.05	Rejected
Entrepreneurship Awareness	300	.442	0.05	Rejected

Significant at 0.05 level of probability

The results in Table 5 show that the correlation coefficient of career counselling and entrepreneurship awareness is 0.442, thus, there is positive correlation between career counselling and entrepreneurship awareness. This suggests that the higher the level of career counselling the higher the entrepreneurship awareness of the in-school adolescents.

Findings reveal a significant positive relationship between career counselling and entrepreneurship awareness of in-school adolescents. This is shown by the calculated r-coefficient of 0.442 which is significant at 0.01 level of probability. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between career counselling and in-school adolescents' entrepreneurship awareness is rejected as the relationship is significant.

Discussion of Findings

The findings as contained in this study revealed that the independent variable, career counselling significantly correlated with the dependent variables (career adjustment and youth entrepreneurship awareness). This is corroborated by the findings of Akinade (2016). Ezidimma (2015) and Nwaobi (2015). The most vital reason for the introduction of Guidance and Counselling in Nigerian schools as enunciated in the National Policy on Education (2013) is basically for proper career counselling of the less informed young Nigerian youths, that they may become aware and achieve realistic decisions on appropriate career and development. Therefore, it is expected that effective career counselling in schools would have the capacity to adequately enhance career adjustment and create entrepreneurship awareness in a country laden with youth unemployment and empowerment challenges. When adolescents are adequately exposed to effective career counselling in schools, they would become curious and conscious of their ability to be self-reliant thus, they would be encouraged to think of becoming self-employed and enterprising entrepreneurs in a world of massive youth unemployment.

The findings of the study also revealed that career counselling in Imo State schools is at the low level and ineffective. This is evident in the results in Table 1. The table showed low level of career counselling as revealed by the participants in the study. This could be inferred to mean that the Imo State schools have not adequately embraced counselling services or they have dearth of qualified counsellors to take up this responsibility in Imo State. Table 2 results, however, show that students demonstrated moderate level of career adjustment. What may have informed this development in this study could be the fact that most of the parents are knowledgeable and they can have a lot of impact on their children's educational and career decision pattern at least to a reasonable extent. Thus, as much as possible, the result may have been due to parental or family influence on the choices and decisions children make, which, in this circumstance, may be better than nothing.

If there is no effective career counselling, it may be difficult to attain sound career adjustment and entrepreneurship endowment may not be awakened in the adolescent. Perhaps that is the reason the results in Table 3 which showed, generally, low level of entrepreneurship awareness among adolescent in Imo State secondary schools

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicated there is significant correlation between the independent variable (career counselling) and dependent variables (career adjustment and youth entrepreneurship awareness). This implies that if effective career counselling is not given adequate attention, the objective of the initial idea/reason for the introduction of career counselling in schools as enshrined in the document of the National Policy on Education (2013) would be invalidated especially in Imo State. Therefore, relationships exist among career counselling, career adjustment and youth entrepreneurship awareness.

Implications

Based on the findings the following implications were highlighted: the study revealed that effective career counselling is lacking in schools in Imo State. The implication here is that there may be practically no trained counsellors in the schools in this study or there may be trained counsellors, but they are not allowed to carry out their professional duties to students in the schools. It may also imply that effective career counselling activities are not carried out because the counsellors do not have total knowledge of their duties to students in the schools.

The moderate career adjustment and empowerment revealed in the study in spite of the low level of counselling in schools could imply that it is very likely these students have very high motivating families where parents and siblings are significant in working on the perception of the students towards career attainment and empowerment back home.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are, therefore, made:

1. Government of Imo State should look into the guidance counselling services/activities of schools in the state through the state education ministry with the intend to see what is happening in the state unit under study, in order to encourage potential development of the youth and enhance their empowerment and entrepreneurship awareness.

2. School counsellors should be encouraged to be alive to their career and professional callings/responsibilities. They should make efforts to update themselves by attending relevant professional conferences and seminars regularly.
3. School authorities should as much as possible provide the necessary encouragement and support school counsellors' needs to effectively carry out their professional functions to the in-school adolescents (students).
4. Parents should encourage their wards to constantly consult with the school counsellors for their career challenges and counselling for the essence of valid and rewarding decisions on choices of career.
5. The major challenge, as observed in the course of the study, is lack of qualified counsellors in the secondary schools in Imo State. Since career counselling services, cannot be achieved without qualified counsellors, it is imperative that qualified counsellors should be recruited in secondary schools to give their essential service of career counselling to the youths who need it in schools to be properly guided in their decisions regarding choice of career

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