

Journal of Education



Vol. 9, No. 1

September, 2016

**Published by the Faculty of Education,
University of Uyo, P. M. B. 1017, Uyo**

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR SELF RELIANCE: IMPLICATIONS FOR VOCATIONAL COUNSELLING

GERTRUDE A. ARCHIBONG (Ph. D)
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS, GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING,
FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF UYO, UYO gerkyarch@gmail.com
08064314033

and
INIOBONG NYARKS (Ph. D)
UNIVERSITY STAFF SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY OF UYO, UYO
iniobongnyarks@gmail.com 08037774434

ABSTRACT

Education is seen as instrument of change all over the world. Any fundamental change in the intellectual, social and economic outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution. The need for vocational guidance in schools in Nigeria cannot be contested. Occupational choice is one of the most difficult decisions in a person's life. The fulfillment of this role relies on functional education and education policies. To achieve the much needed functional education in Nigeria, technical and vocational education has a great role to play. Technical and Vocational education provides knowledge, develops skills and inculcates attitudes that are necessary for entry and progression in an occupation. The paper takes a look at the concept, role and benefits of technical vocational education in encouraging economic diversification for self-reliance which will reduce unemployment in Nigeria as well as the implications for Vocational Counselling Services. It was recommended that the curricula of vocational education classes should be broadened to include practical skills and problem-solving experiences that will enable students to reach their career goals in a more realistic way.

Keywords: Vocational Counselling, Self-reliance, technical vocational education, unemployment

Introduction

Nigeria is facing an uncertain future in terms of population explosion, technological advancement and threatening global recession. Thousands of youths who have got what they believe to be education but cannot obtain any employment are roaming the towns and cities (Essien, 2006). The level of unemployment in the country is increasing in geometric progression. This is due to the fact that while at school, most of the youth receive little or no vocational education (Miller, 2005) or any meaningful vocational

guidance. Graduating from Nigerian schools with functional employable skills is still a national problem (Nwachukwu, 2007) and making the right career choice is a major source of anxiety for the youth, parents and guardians.

Many people though educated, do not have skills to manage positions where they should. Not many years ago, it would be pointless to think that secondary school leavers and tertiary institution graduates would find it difficult to secure employment after leaving school. Presently, it is very uncertain how many graduates; secondary

school leavers get jobs, what kind of job do they get and how long it takes them to obtain such jobs? The job market has become very tight. This is why George (2005) observed that in Nigeria today, looking for job is a job itself. Getting a job after leaving school seems to depend more on luck and family connections than on school record or following any established order.

For one to survive in this present era, one has to make use of one's creative talents. The present economic recession and unemployment situation in the country has become a cause for concern. Every individual must seek to diversify the Nigerian economy. This will create jobs and wealth which will bring about self reliance thereby enhancing socio-economic growth. The high level of unemployment and mass poverty in Nigeria and other African nations may partly be attributed to the fact that people do not have the knowledge and skills that would enable them to take up available jobs. Miller (2005) associated the high level of unemployment to the lack of saleable skills by the youths.

Nigeria's development programmes are being hampered by lack of skilled technical personnel (Okoro, 1993). Vocational guidance has a simple three-step process as embedded in Frank Parson's approach (Esen, 1998). Firstly, the clients must be assisted to come to a fairly accurate knowledge of themselves by focusing on their goals, abilities, and aptitudes. Secondly, the clients are led to obtain some understanding of the world of work: the requirements for entry into certain occupations, conditions of success at the job, chances of further training and promotion, the risks involved and other necessary details. And thirdly, there would then be a matching of the

man and the job; for instance, the job of helicopter pilot in training might suit an adventurous and intelligent young man with a liking for somewhat risky outdoor life, and a preference for working with things rather than with people.

This is why a systematic programme of vocational education and counselling is needed to enable individuals obtain the skills they need in order to fill job vacancies that exist. Vocational education is any form of education which specifically prepares an individual to acquire skills and competencies to perform in his chosen occupation. Within the context of this paper, vocational education consists of that formal instruction which helps to develop abilities, attitudes, skills and understanding that make individuals intelligent, occupationally competent to participate in the changing world of work. The primary objective of this form of education is to promote the maximum realization of human potential for social contribution and self-fulfillment through work.

Vocational guidance and counselling services are all the services given to help an individual understand the world of work, how to find his rightful place in it and perform optimally. A vocational counselling service helps to guide an individual into right subject combination, right choice of job training and right employment. The absence of vocational services in the schools make a greater number of Nigerian youths choose jobs without relating them to their interests and capacity to cope with the nature of the jobs (Onyejiaku, 2001).

Career development theory of Holland (1959) held that the influences on and outcomes of career development are one aspect of socialization as part of a broader process of

human development. Career development is a continuous lifelong process of development experiences that focuses on seeking, obtaining and processing information about self, occupational and educational alternatives, lifestyles and role options (Spokane & Cruza-Guet, 2005). Career development process is where an individual fashions a work identity. Career development to the authors is the process through which people come to understand themselves as they relate to the world of work and their role in it. That is to say that an individual must look into self, identify talent and develop it in line with his personality type matching work environment.

Holland (1959) postulated that vocational interest is an expression of one's personality. Holland conceptualized the vocational interest into six typologies which are Realistic (R), Investigative (I), Artistic (A), Social (S), Enterprising (E), and Conventional (C). If a person's degree of resemblance to the six vocational personality and interest types could be assessed, it is possible to generate, denote and summarize one's career interest. This approach gives explicit attention to behavioural style or personality types as the major influence in career choice development. One of the common themes of Holland's theory holds that occupational achievement, stability and satisfaction depend on congruence between one's personality and job environment. In the career choice and development process, people search for environments that would allow them to exercise their skills and abilities, and to express their attitudes and values (Athanasou & Esbroeck, 2008).

Vocational education assumes that a choice of an occupation has been made and that appropriate training is needed to enable the individual enter his chosen occupation. This is common for occupational preparation. Vocational education is provided in special programmes offered at secondary and post-secondary institutions. Its primary purpose is to equip individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them enter specialized occupations. Vocational education would be effective based on a good foundation of general education and adequate vocational guidance given to an individual.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) saw technical education as a comprehensive term that covers all aspects of education involving the study of technologies and related sciences, the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in the various levels of socio-economic life. Thus, technical vocational education is a practical oriented form of study, geared towards skill acquisition, inculcating practical attitudes and understanding that guarantee occupational vocational self-reliance. The goals of technical and vocational education are: to provide trained manpower in applied sciences, technology and business; to provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for national development; to give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals for self-reliance.

As observed by Nwachukwu (2007), there is a missing link in the implementation and practice of the national policy on education. Educational institutions pass millions of young Nigerian graduates without proper vocationalisation of

their education in terms of identifiable competencies and skills. Any school certificate worth awarding by any educational institution in Nigeria should have a functional utility and relevance to an occupational area with specific work roles. The certification emphasis without making functional skills congruent with the quality and level of the intellectual knowledge certified in paper has, according to Nwachukwu (2007), for long left the labour market robbed of maximum in-put from the products. The situation calls for a review to emphasize technical and vocational skill components in the curriculum deliveries.

The school curriculum needs to help even an individual with basic education to join the national labour force as skilled worker with employable skills. Children at the basic level of education require comprehensive vocational skills training aimed at preparing them with fundamental skills in courses that they would need to enter related work setting and explore for a possible career. This alternative path to education would present the possibility of the individual maturing into what he can possibly be in life. Unemployment would be reduced and would make the individual self reliant and self actualized. In view of the foregoing the focus of this paper on technical and vocational education for self reliance with implication for vocational counselling becomes imperative.

The Case of Vocational Education and Vocational Counselling Services

Vocational guidance in Nigeria dates as far back as 1959 when some religious Sisters of St. Theresa's College, Oke Ado Ibadan out of concern

for the welfare of their final year students, decided to invite a number of eminent resource persons to talk with girls about jobs, and also to advise the Sisters themselves about jobplacement for the girls. The development just like Frank Parson's effort in Boston 50 years earlier, laid emphasis on job choosing, job training, job performance and job satisfaction to the exclusion of personal or interpersonal problems.

Vocational education is very pertinent in preparing persons for employment in recognized occupations. Vocational education provides the skills, knowledge, attitudes and competencies necessary for effective employment in specific occupations. This therefore makes vocational counselling service very necessary to help the youth understand the world of work. It implies the dynamics of the world of work making the most appropriate career choice, crystallizing choice, training or all types of professional preparation.

Vocational education is an education which prepares an individual for gainful employment in the occupation of his choice. Wykle (1972) in Okoro (1993 : 3) states that:

“the main objective of vocational education is to ensure that all children and youth leave school as better citizens with skills sufficient to obtain employment, pursue additional career training through post-secondary institutions or further their academic education”

The function of vocational education is to provide knowledge, develop skills and indicate the attitudes that are necessary for entry and progress

in an occupation.

It is designed to teach skills, develop aptitudes, attitudes and competencies that are needed for one to succeed in a given occupation. Vocational education is that portion of education which goes further than general education by dealing in a more specialized manner with the development of occupational competency. Vocational education involves a variety of student experiences or learning activities. Vocational education provides opportunities for children who may not be academically-oriented and wish to further their education, but need to possess some form of occupational ability to earn a living (Uba, 1990).

Vocational counselling has a potential ability which gives each individual a maximum opportunity for the discovery, development and direction of his potential for making an economic and social contribution through the world for work (Denga, 1983). Vocational education would be most effective when it is preceded, accompanied and followed by vocational counselling. Vocational counselling organizes school work so that the pupil may be helped to discover his own capacities, aptitudes and interest and therefore arrive at intelligent occupational decision. Vocational counselling is an effective means of guiding individuals to develop self-awareness through work within the society (Onyejiaku, 2001).

Vocational counselling plays a vital role in human development. Its primary objective is to promote the maximum realization of human potential for social contribution and self fulfillment through work. The guidance counselor uses various psychological tests to determine a pupil's interests, needs, strengths,

weaknesses, personalities in order to know how best to help him make a realistic choice of vocation. The guidance counselor can be a great help by organizing regular career counselling activities via group and individual counselling, lectures from guest speakers drawn from different employment agencies on a career day/week awareness campaign.

Children need to be exposed to film shows related to career choice, careers tours, field trips, visits to industries and other employment establishments to help create occupational awareness. Vocational counselling would help the young ones to understand that there is what is called job families. This implies that occupations are related in kinds by subject combination. For instance if one wants to be a medical doctor and cannot make it, he can train as a pharmacist, dentist or a nurse which will still keep him in the hospital environment. It would also make them to know that if one wants to be a pharmacist, he should not study business oriented subjects such as commerce, typing, shorthand or account. In other words, school subjects should be related to areas in the labour market.

School subjects are perceived as the process while the recipients work productivity is its product (Onyejiaku, 2010). The guidance counselor helps an adolescent through vocational guidance to understand his alternative occupational choices in life. Vocational education recognizes individual differences as there are differences in the needs of people. The way one interacts with his social, cultural and physical environment makes work not to have the same meaning for all individuals (Akpan, 2009). The multiplicity of occupations and the

obvious differences in characteristics and needs among individuals make vocational guidance and counselling very intriguing.

Onyejiaku (2001) was of the view that individuals should be intelligently guided to occupational choices within the framework of a life that would be personally satisfying, socially constructive and economically productive. Individual abilities, potentials, career perceptions and limitations should be taken into consideration when offering vocational guidance. This is due to the fact that the vocational needs of different people differ markedly. Therefore, vocational preparations for different people must be channeled to specific areas which will meet their individual needs. Vocational training is the knowledge given to an individual to select his occupation to earn a living (Oscar, 2009). That is to say that such knowledge will give the individual ability to live an independent life which encourages self-reliance, because knowledge is power.

Implications for Vocational Counselling Services

Encouraging economic diversification for self-reliance through technical vocational education has implications for vocational counselling services to the extent that an adolescent who is not guided and helped to become a useful, productive adult might end up being useless to self and the society at large. Anagbogu (2002) was of the view that Nigerian adolescent needs vocational guidance and counselling but the decision to take any career depends greatly on his abilities, his relevant knowledge, his mental and physical resources, his personal interest, parental influence, peer

group influence, the need for the country and help from siblings.

Counselling services are needed in all aspects of human life, because individual is constantly faced with the task of making decision which may vary from one problem and situation to another. The decision making may be related to social, moral, emotional and vocational problems. The role of the counsellor is to help the individual (counselee) make wise decisions and choices after thinking and reasoning carefully.

Vocational counselling plays a vital role in human development. The counselor is well versed with the skills of observation, determination of adolescents interest, needs, strengths, weaknesses and personalities through the use of various psychological tests. The counselor knows how best to help these adolescents make a realistic choice of vocation. Counselling enables people to examine their needs and problems and in so doing reduce the confusion in the thoughts and feelings that should be stressed.

Counselling being holistic in nature deals with every aspect of the individual. Counselling as observed by Okoye, Adejumo and Achebe (2000) is not simply to solve the client's problem but more importantly to helping him identify his abilities, interest, capabilities and be able to use his naturally endowed potentials in becoming self-reliant and self-actualized. Uba (1990) asserted that counselling assists students in developing decision making competencies and formulation of future plans. Specialists in the guidance and counselling point out that choice of a life career should be

considered as a process rather than an event (McDowel & Hostetler, 2008).

Vocational education via counselling would enable them grow up in the right direction career-wise in order to be self-reliant and self-fulfilled. Vocational counselling helps individual gain knowledge in the world of work. Vocational counselling makes the client learn about self, world of work, process of choice and preparation to enter into and progress in a particular vocation (Oniyama, 2006). This implies that vocational counselling prepares one for the world of work by harnessing all his potentials towards a particular vocation to succeed therein. Vocational counselling is necessary to help the adolescents develop their interest, abilities, aptitudes, aspirations, values, goals, and personality traits. Vocational counselling will help the individual to know what prevails in the world of work in terms of job availability, the requirements and mode of entry in order to succeed therein. Vocational counselling can be done on individual basis or in groups, in school and non-school settings to fasten vocational development of youths.

Conclusion

This paper so far has tried to look at technical and vocational education for self reliance with its implications for vocational counseling. One can only survive the economic recession and unemployment situation in this present era by thinking of what to do to be self employed. This calls for the provision of technical vocational education and vocational counselling services by schools from the lowest level to the highest. Vocational education would help the youths into jobs that will suit them constitute a useful

approach to livelihood change thereby encouraging economic diversification, promoting self reliance and reducing unemployment. Vocational education programmes, focus on specific vocations for entry into defined workplace. Technical education, on the other hand is not designed for any particular vocation but provides general technical knowledge. In fact technical and vocational education is the inclusion of basic technical and scientific knowledge with the skill based vocational programme.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in order to promote technical and vocational education for self reliance:

1. The curricula of vocational education classes should be broadened to include practical skills and problem-solving experiences that will enable students to reach their career goals in a more realistic way.
2. Parents should encourage their children to make use of guidance and counselling services.
3. Parents should watch and observe hidden talents in their children and seek to harness the skills for proper career choice.
4. Parents should not impose career choice on their children.
5. The planners and policy makers should emphasize on employment of guidance counsellors at all levels of education in the Nigerian educational system. This emphasis should be for both the public and private schools.
6. Government should de-emphasize the

importance of paper qualification (certificate).

7. Qualified teachers in all the trade subjects should be employed.

REFERENCES

- Akpan, F. (2009). *Choosing your career with ease*. Ikeja, Lagos: Green Olive Publishers.
- Anagbogu, M. A. (2002). *Foundations of Guidance and Counselling for Colleges and Universities* (2nd ed.) Enugu: Academic Printing Press.
- Athanasou, J. A. and Esbroeck, R. V. (Eds.) (2008). *International handbook of career guidance*. New York: Springer Science and Business Media.
- Denga, D. I. (1983). *Vocational Education*. Calabar: Rapid Educational Publishers Ltd.
- Esen, A. J. A. (1998). *Guidance and counseling for socio-political stability in Nigeria*. Uyo: Modern Business Press Ltd.
- Essien, E. E. (2006). *Entrepreneurship Concept and Practice*. Uyo: Abaam Publishing Co.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. (2004). *National Policy on Education*. Yaba, Lagos: NERDC Press, pp 29 - 35
- George, I. N. (2005). Towards a Realistic Occupational choice. In: U. I. Anwana (Ed.) *Guidance and Counselling: Information Handbook for Students, Teachers, Parents, Professional Helpers*. Enugu: Academic Publishing Company.
- Holland, J. L. (1959). A theory of vocational choice. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 6, 35-45
- McDowell, J. & Hostetler, B. (2008). *Handbook on Counselling Youth. A Comprehensive Guide for equipping Youth workers, Pastors, Teachers, Parents*. Lagos: Bible for All Limited.
- Miller, I. O. (2005). Technology education: A necessity for youth empowerment against unemployment. *Nigeria Journal of Nigerian Association of Teachers of Technology*. 18th Annual Conference at Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt.
- Nwachukwu, D. N. (2007). *The Teacher Counsellor for today's school Enhancing Millennium Teaching Learning Process*. Calabar: University of Calabar Press.
- Okoro, O. M. (1993). *Principles and Methods in Vocational and Technical Education*. Nsukka: University Trust Publishers.
- Okoye, N. U., Adejumo, D. & Achebe, C. (2000). *Fundamental of guidance and counselling* (2nd ed). Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books (Nigeria) Plc.

Oniyama, E. E. (2006). *Basic Educational Guidance and Counselling* (3rd ed) Warri: International Publishers.

Onyejiaku, F. (2001). *Careers Guidance and Counselling Services in Schools*. Lagos: Vita-Nasco and Company.

Oscar, R. (2009). Vocational Training for Special Children. [Http://www.brighhub.com/educationalspecial/articles/16108.aspx](http://www.brighhub.com/educationalspecial/articles/16108.aspx)

Spokane, A. R., & Cruza-Guet, M. C. (2005). Holland's theory of vocational personalities in work environments. In S. D. Brown and R. T. Lent (Eds.). *Career development and counseling: Putting theory and research to work*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Uba, A. (1990). *Counselling Hints*. Ibadan: Claverianum Press.

Uzowane, M. C. (2015). Encouraging diversification in Nigeria in the face of dwindling oil revenue. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*. 6 (4). www.iiste.org/journals/index.php/JEDS/article/view19994/20522 Retrieved August 5th, 2016