Empirical Analysis of the Impact of Career Counselling on Job Findings Amongst Young Graduates in States in Nigeria

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Abstract - *The study ascertained the impact of career counselling on job finding amongst graduates in the experimental and control groups. The quasi-experimental design guided the study. Four null hypotheses were formulated. The population of the study comprised all batch B 2012/2013 National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members in Rivers, Enugu, and Osun states with a total number of ten thousand five hundred and seventy three (10,573) (Source: NYSC Statistics 2013). A sample of one thousand (1000) participants was drawn from the population using stratified random sampling technique. A job finding test (JFT) was developed by the researchers and used for data collection. The four hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using independent t-test statistics. The results showed that participants who have experienced career counselling performed better than those that have not in the job finding test. This finding made it obvious that career counselling has significant impact on job finding amongst young graduates in Nigeria. Based on the findings, conclusion was reached, implications were drawn and recommendations were made.*

Keywords – Career Counseling, employment, graduates

I. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria has a large population of long-term job seekers. This ideology is provable of little job advert is being put on. It is obvious that over 10,000 youths are likely to apply for less than 100 vacancies positions. To mitigate this problem, the government provides job placement services such as career counselling, helping to match employers with job seekers. Despite this commitment, youth unemployment remains high, and even the graduates with good degree grades (such as 2.1, 2.2, first class) often have difficulty in finding a job. This suggests that more intensive forms of career counselling and support are needed to improve the efficiency of job finding.

Ekpenyong (2005) observed that since the close of the 1970s, the Nigerian economy has been on the decline. One resultant effect of this development according to Ekpenyong is that many school leavers and fresh college and university graduates have come to be faced with more experienced but retrenched workers. They often assume that with the possession of a certificate and given availability of a job vacancy, they can easily obtain a job. This assumption proves abortive except when based upon social contact and linkage factors by which individual utilizes the advantage of his connections with the people he knows to get a job, god fatherlism and man-no-man concepts. Outside this, young persons often fail to secure jobs of their choice, despite their good qualification, on account of lack of those skills that are prerequisites for successful job finding (Ekpenyong, 2005).

It is noticeable that the lapses in the preparation of graduates in job finding techniques is particularly due to the absence or ineffective career counselling in the Nigerian Universities and colleges. This is true because "matching" in job finding is very important. Personnel interviewer or employer can use tests and interviews to select persons whose personality and cognitive characteristics fit with the conditions of the job, and any person that did not pass through career counselling may not pass such test or interview. Career counsellors have the ability to assist their clients to find jobs that are suitable to their personality. This fact is supported by the assertion made by Studd (2005) that career counsellors have as their fundamental role the need to prepare students for satisfying and rewarding lifestyle. Career counselling is therefore the process of helping an individual to get career satisfaction. It is worthy of note that the satisfaction is however guaranteed by successfully passing through the job finding processes which Ekpenyong (2005) listed and explained as follows: self-stock-taking; finding a vacancy; making an application; and attending an interview.

Self-stock taking means the process of making assessment of oneself in relation to one's achievements and failures, general and specific competences. Seven point plan developed by Roger (1952) is often use for this assessment. They are: Physical make up General health; Attainment: Educational qualification, training and experience; Intelligence (reasoning ability). Ability to discuss ideas, common sense, judgement; Aptitude: e.g. manual dexterity, verbal and mechanical; Interest: Physical, intellectual, social persuasive and artistic; Disposition: Are you warm-hearted or cold, gregarious or solitary, self-starter, e.g. social or religious restriction; and Circumstances: Family situation, level of commitment is the restrictives, e.g. social or religious restriction. This seven point plan can help career counsellor to prepare his client adequately for job finding.

The next important process in job finding is "finding vacant careers libraries which should be able to stock and supply information on various sources of job openings. However, because of lack of such libraries in most Nigerian colleges and universities, the following are the alternative sources of job information: Recruitment agencies and consulting corporations; Newspaper advertisements; Trade papers and professional journals; Contact persons; Speculative search; Vacancy boards; Internet adverts; Electronic media (radio and television); Co-job seekers; Personal networks (Sources: Ekpenyong, 2005 & Nweke, 2013).

Career counsellors could lead students to explore available sources of job information in the careers library, and to make a list of them for discussion. The counsellors could also give talks on job finding techniques and under industrial visits with a view to find out when and how vacancies usually arise.

The third process in job finding is making application. Nweke (2013) noted that application documents need to be well written by any prospective job applicant before he can be considered and invited for a job interview. However, application documents include: CV/Resume, and cover letter. Career counsellor can devise a number of exercises to enable these students prepare for effective management of letters of application, application form and C.V.s (Ekpenyong, 2005).

The last stage of job finding is attending interview. This is perhaps the most critical part of the whole job finding process as observed by Nweke (2013). About four types of interview are often observe use by employers. They are traditional interview, standardized interview, structure interview, panel interview and psychological tests (Ekpenyong, 2005). The way students, especially those in final year, are prepared could go along way to promote their chances of success at selection interview therefore, career counsellors have a task to train students on listening, talking, clarifying and exploring skills so that the students will perform well in job interview when they graduate from school.

The French government runs a national employment bureaucracy Pole, Employs, which matches job seekers with potential employers, as well as providing benefits and career guidance to the unemployed. This program was implemented in 10 regions of France, among 57,000 young people currently looking for job through the Pole Employs, the targeted population included individuals aged 18 to 30 when held a college degree and had been unemployed for more 6 months. About 10,000 individuals ended up signing contracts to receive counselling and career placement help from counsellor. Researchers collected data from Pole Employs, as well as successful job-seekers, on the job status of participants. Results showed that intensive job counselling in France helped young graduates find work slightly faster than peers in the same areas (Duflo, Gurgand, Ratherlot & Zamora, 2010). Intensive job or career counselling in Nigeria would also help young graduates in Nigeria to find job faster because career counselling focuses generally on issues such as career exploration, career development and other career related issues. It gives career-based information that would enable a job seeker to succeed in all the processes of job finding (Van Esbroeck and Athanansou 2008). Broadly emphasized, career counselling involves a variety of professionals activities which focus on supporting people in dealing with career-related challenges both preventively and in difficult situations (such as unemployment) career counsellors work with people from various walks of life, such as adolescents seeking to explore career options, experienced professionals contemplating a career changes, parents who want to return to the world of work after taking time to raise their child, or people seeking employment (Schiermann, Ertelt, Katsarov, Mulvey, Reid and Weber, 2012). Career counselling is offered in various settings, including in groups and individually, in or by means of digital communication (Katsarov, Dorr and Weber, 2012). The network for innovation in career guidance and counselling in Europe (NICE) – a consortium of 45 European institutions of higher education in the field of career counselling – has agreed on a system of professional roles for guidance

counsellors. The role is seen as an important facet of the career guidance and counselling profession. The roles according to Schiermann et al (2012) are: The career counsellor should supports people in developing their own career management competences; the career information and assessment expert should supports people in assessing their personal characteristics and needs, then connecting them with the labour market and education systems; the career counsellor supports should individuals in understanding their situations, so as to work through issues towards solutions; the programme and service manager ensures the quality and delivery of career guidance and counselling organizations' services; the social systems intervener and Developer should supports clients (even) in crisis and works to change systems for the better.

Through the expertise of professional career counsellors in career development and labour markets, they can put a person's qualification, experience, strengths and weakness in a broad perspective taking into consideration their desired salary, personal hobbies and interests, location, job market and educational possibilities, through their counselling and teaching abilities, career counsellors can additionally support people in gaining a better understanding of what really matters for them personally, how they can plan their careers autonomously, or help them in making tough decisions and getting through times of crises. Also, career counsellors are often capable of supporting their clients in finding suitable placements/jobs or finding the support of other helpful services (council of the European Union, 2008). It is based on these facts that the present study sought to find, empirically the impact of career counselling on job findings amongst young graduates in Nigeria.

II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Undergraduates and fresh graduates desire to secure a well paying job after leaving the institute of higher learning and one year youth service respectively. Unfortunately, this desire is not always available for so many people. Less than a half of the graduates is employed each year and more than a quarter is underemployed while the rest remain unemployed. The brain behind this terrifying news is not necessarily incompetence of our graduates or poor qualifications but basically due to lack of basic knowledge on job finding processes such as self stalk-taking, finding vacancy, making application and attending for interview-which is attributable to paucity of professional career counselling in Nigeria. As job

market in Nigeria is becoming very competitive, so do young graduates need to package themselves through acquiring necessary skills and techniques of job finding. In order to significantly reduce the number of naive graduates roaming the street in search for job this paper ought to empirically analyze the impact of career counselling on job findings amongst young graduates in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of career counselling on job findings among graduates in Nigeria. Specifically, the study aimed to check difference(s) in self stalk-taking between counselled and uncounselled graduates; to ascertain the differences in finding job vacancy between counselled and uncounselled graduates; to investigate the differences that exist between counselled and uncounselled graduates in making job application; and to find out whether counseled and uncounselled graduates differ in terms of attending job interview.

Research Hypothesis

Ho_1: There is no significant difference between counselled and uncounselled graduates in their self stalk-taking.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference between counselled and uncounselled graduates in terms of finding job vacancy.

Ho_3: Counselled and uncounselled young graduates do not differ significantly in making job application.

Ho_4: Counselled and uncounselled young graduates do not differ significantly in terms of attending job interview.

III. METHODS

A quasi-experimental research design was adopted for the study. This design was considered appropriate in the study because it is an empirical study used to estimate the causal impact of an intervention on its target population (Dinardo, 2008). It allows the researchers to control the assignment to the treatment condition using some criterion, and also provides equal chance to study participants being assigned to the intervention group or the comparison group. Participants in the study were the Batch B 2012/2013 corps members serving in Enugu State, River State and Osun State during passing out ceremony on Thursday 6th June, 2013. Job Finding Test (JFT) developed by the researchers was administered to the participants. Demographic section of the test also investigated the participants who have received professional career

counselling before and those that have never received. The test has four sections – self stalk finding vacancy, making applications and attending interview. The three states selected for the study represent South-East, South-South and South-Western zones of Nigeria respectively. It was assumed that corps members serving in the three states can duely represent the country since the population was so heterogeneous that it got across every culture and tribe in Nigeria. This population, according to NYSC 2013 statistics was: Rivers State – 3680, Enugu – 3096, Osun – 3797, total – 10,573 (ten thousand five hundred and seventy three). The sample in the study was 1000 (one thousand) drawn using stratified sampling method. The use of this method was justified because, according to Hunt and Tyrrell (2001), in statistical surveys when sub-populations vary, it is advantageous to sample each subpopulation (Stratum) independently. Thus, the sampling is shown in table 1.

Validity of the instrument was done by expert in Educational measurement and evaluation.

Table 1. Sampling Technique

S/N	State	Population	Sample	%
1	Rivers	3680	348	34.8
2	Enugu	3096	293	29.3
3	Osun	3797	359	35.9
	Total	**10,573**	**1,000**	**100**

Test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument as 0.81. This point was high enough to justify the use of the instrument in the study.

Data Analysis

The test scripts were properly coded and scored after administration to ease analysis. Each item was scored right or wrong and each right answer was given 2 marks and the wrong one was given. After scoring, the test scripts were divided into two groups labeled "counselled and uncounselled" i.e., experimental and control groups. Graduates who have received career counselling before were grouped under counselled while others were considered as uncounselled. The test had total of 50 items. Any score above 50 was considered as being influenced by career counselling.

IV. RESULT

Table 2. Frequency distribution of counselled and uncounselled participants in the study

Participants	Rivers State	Enugu State	Osun State	Total	Mean	SD	Std. Error
Counselled	102	97	113	312	1.5	0.54	.845
Uncounselled	246	196	246	688	2.0	0.89	.845
Total	**348**	**293**	**359**	**1000**			

Table 2 shows the number of counselled and uncounselled participants in the study.

Table 3. Difference in the self stalk-taking of the counselled and the uncounselled young graduates

Participants	N	X	SD	df	t	Sig.	Std. Error	P > 0.05
Counselled	312	13.64	4.46	998	4.16	.000	.25305	1.96
Uncounselled	688	12.46	3.98				.15220	

The result obtained from table 3 showed that the calculated value of t (4.16) was greater than the critical value (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance and 998 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis one was rejected.

Table 4. Difference in the finding of job vacancies amongst counselled and uncounselled young graduates

Participants	N	X	SD	Df	t	Sig.	Std. Error	p> 0.05
Counselled	312	15.38	4.6	998	11.60	.000	.264	1.96
Uncounselled	688	12.12	3.84				.146	

It was observed in table 4 that the calculated value of t (11.60) was greater than the critical value (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance and 998 degrees of freedom. Therefore the null hypothesis 2 in the study was rejected based on this result.

Table 5. Counselled and uncounselled young graduates in making job application.

Participants	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Sig.	Std. Error	p > 0.05
Counselled	312	14.09	4.68	998	4.51	.000	.255	1.96
Uncounselled	688	12.77	4.07				.155	

The null hypothesis 3 in the study was rejected because the calculated value of t (4.51) was greater than the critical value (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance and 998 degrees of freedom.

Table 6. Counselled and uncounselled young graduates in terms of attending job interview

Participants	N	X	SD	df	t	Sig.	Std. Error	P > 0.05
Counselled	312	12.98	4.43	998	2.33	.000	.250	1.96
Uncounselled	688	12.32	3.92				.149	

Calculated t-value (2.33) obtained from analysis of hypothesis 4 was greater than the critical t (1.96) at 998 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, therefore, the null hypothesis four in the study was rejected.

V. DISCUSSION

The result obtained from the analysis of data in the study showed that career counselling has impact on job findings amongst graduates in Nigeria, even though the graduates who have received career counselling before are quite lesser in number than those that have not received career counselling.

The analysis of data in table one which represents hypothesis one in the study made it obvious that significant difference exist between graduates who have experienced career counselling and those that have not in their self-stalk-taking the former scored higher than the later in the test that was given. This implies that career counselling enables the graduates to carry out self stalk process easily. That is, the counselled graduates were able to make self assessment in relation to career. They understood how to analyze their educational attainment, intelligence, aptitude, interest, disposition and circumstances in line with career ambitions. This discovery supports the assertion made by Studd (2005) and Ekpenyong (2005) that career counsellors need to prepare students for satisfying career. The ability of the graduates to know how to assess themselves in line with career is due to the effect of counselling they have received. Such graduates can easily match their personality with career and stand a good chance of acquiring a job than their counterpart who were not counselled on career issues.

Analysis of the second hypothesis revealed that participants who have received career counselling before scored higher than their counterparts who have not received career counselling on the test of "finding job vacancy". They knew the alternative sources of job information such as Newspaper, consulting corporations, recruitment agencies, trade papers, professional journals, persons electronic media, internet, speculation search and vacancy boards.

According to Ekpenyong (2005), career counsellors help individuals to explore available sources of job information. The uncounselled graduates may not know some of these sources. They may hold unto one or two sources they knew and this delays their chances of getting a job.

Analysis of the third hypothesis showed that counselled graduates can make application that meets the taste of the employer more than uncounselled ones. Career counsellors often take time to assist his client to learn how to make good application. The counsellors explain to their client all the processed involved in making application such as a CV/resume, cover letter, reference letter etc. As Nweke (2013) observed that application documents need to be well written, by any prospective job applicant before he can be considered and invited for a job interview, it means that those who are not counselled on this important issue may stay too long after graduation without getting a job.

The last hypothesis testing result in the study leads to the assertion that individuals who do not experience career counselling do not perform better than their counselled counterpart in job interview. This is because career counselling exposes individuals to techniques and skills of passing job interview. Career counsellors train client on listening, talking, clarifying and exploring skills and this enables the clients (students) to perform well in job interview when they graduate from school.

VI. CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the whole, the findings of this study revealed that career counselling has significant impact on job finding amongst young graduates in Nigeria. This finding is in consonant with many previous studies. For instance, Van Esbroeck and Athanansou (2008) opined that career counselling focuses generally on issues such as career exploration, career development and other career related issues, Schiermann et al (2012) who postulated that career counsellors work with people from various works of life develop career management competences and council of the European Union (2008)

who noted that career counsellors are often capable of supporting their clients in finding suitable jobs. Also, the findings support the submission of Duflo, Gurgand, Rathelot and Zamora (2010) who discovered that intensive career counselling helped young graduates find job. It is therefore concluded that young graduates who received career counselling either while they were in school or during National Service would find job easily than those who throughout their staying in University and service year did not experience career counselling.

Based on the conclusion, implications were drawn that career counsellors should make their services known to the general public through marketing strategies so that many people can benefit from it even outside the school setting; that career counselling should be included in the universities or college curriculum so that every student of higher learning would have equal opportunity of experiencing the services; and that Federal Government, in a bit to reduce unemployment rate in the counting, should run a national employment bureau which will match job seekers with potential employers, as well as providing benefits and career guidance/counselling to the unemployed just like what happened 2010 in France.

Based on the conclusion and the implications of the study, the researchers recommended that more career counsellors should be employed to work in primary schools, secondary schools, colleges and universities; that government should established functional counselling careers in all state and Local Government Headquarters in the country and that every individual should recognizes counselling as a means of getting solution to every challenge or problem and patronizes it as well.

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