



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF APPLIED TECHNOLOGIES IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

<http://www.jatlim.org>

International Journal of Applied Technologies in Library and Information Management 6 (3) 04 -30 -37

ISSN: (online) 2467 - 8120

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Manuscript Number: JALIM - 2020-06.3/30-37

Career Counseling Service: A Tool For Sustainable Career Choice for Library and Information Science Students in Nigerian Universities

Abstract

This paper explored the need for career counselling service as a tool for sustainable career choice for library and information science students in universities in Nigeria, for the fact that many young adults in Nigeria are unemployed and others unemployable, traceable to a number of factors and lack of career counselling service has been identified as a major cause for this unfortunate situation of young adults in Nigeria with all the repercussions. The paper made a clarification of basic concepts including: career choice, counselling service, library and information science students, it further discussed the need for career counselling service for the library and information science students in Nigeria and highlighted a number of reasons such as: to create awareness for the students to know specific abilities, skills and other personal considerations necessary for various occupations in the labour market, career counseling could help students identify problems and prospects of different career paths thus the learners could make informed career choice thereby avoid the risk of change of career path later in life, career counselling could also assist students choose fields that are in tune with their skills and job expectations. In spite of all these, hurdles to career choice were identified and extensively dwell upon, related issues such as: societal attitude towards certain occupations, parental due pressure on their children, peer group influence toward career choice by students were traced down as hurdles to informed career choice for young adults in Nigeria. The paper made cogent recommendations and concluded that if these recommendations are adhered to by the government, management of universities, counselling units of universities, educators and students, the issue of career counselling and career choice for library and information science students in universities in Nigeria would be managed to a great extent and the students will graduate and find jobs that match their characteristics and then the issue of joblessness will be a thing of the past in Nigeria.

Keywords: Career Counseling Service, Career Choice, LIS students, Nigerian Universities.

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1.1 Introduction

It is not true that there are no jobs in the Nigerian labour market for Nigerians, it is also true that many graduates (university,

polytechnics and colleges of education ones) are unemployed or unemployable for various reasons. Unemployment of adults is a global phenomenon, even tiger nations of the world

like United State of America (USA), China and France are struggling with its through effective economic policies of their countries to the extent that their private sectors have joined governments to tackle it head on. Such is the case in many countries in Africa. In Nigeria, the Federal, State and Local Governments have in the past initiated various programmes in order to subdue unemployment of youths such programmes include Sure-P, N-Power but the phenomenon is not been reduced rather it is getting worst with the university graduates who are not trained in specific skills in most courses.

The repercussions for this are idleness, youth restiveness, political thuggery, cybercrimes, stealing, armed robbery which the Nigerian society is suffering. It is equally true that in Nigeria today, we have fake lawyers, fake medical doctors, politicians and administrators as a result of wrong selection of subject combination, and wrong choice of career by many Nigerian youths.

Based on this situation, it is the position of this paper that Nigerians need value reorientation to adjust their psychological and social lifestyles to conform to global realities as well as a shift in the philosophy of the education system. This can be achieved through the introduction of entrepreneurship/ skills acquisition programmes in all the Nigerian universities which must be supported with an appropriate and sustainable annual budget, in the same vein, undergraduate and postgraduate ones could be encouraged to accept and key into the programme not only that, career counselling service be awoken at the faculties and departmental levels in universities to enable students take advantage of the counselling services so provided to enhance their choice of careers in the labour market in Nigerian and abroad. If these are established, it will be possible to reposition counselling services at the secondary and tertiary levels of Nigerian education system, whereby, “students”

including library and information ones will be properly guided and counselled to choose subjects and courses that could lead them take informed decision on career or vocational opportunities for sustainable development of their person and the larger society. Then the issue of unemployment may be reduced or at best be a thing of the past.

2.1 Review of Related Literature

2.2 Clarification of Constructs Counselling Service

Sustainable counselling service is quite a familiar issue discussed among researchers, students, counsellors, education policy makers, educators and employers of labour in Nigeria. Scholars such as Prideaux, (2006), Denga, (2009 and 2018), Brown and Krane, (2010), UNESCO, (2010), Her, (2013), Zaria, (2014), and Akume, (2018), defined the construct from different perspectives with the focus on a trained personnel (counsellor) assisting or encouraging the clients to know who they are, their interests, goals and plan towards achieving their set goals.

Counselling specifically as defined by Ipaye in Akume (2018) is concerned with creating opportunities and suitable environment for the personal, social, educational and vocational/career growth of the individual. Akume further maintained that counselling is an interactive relationship in which a person needing help is assisted by a trained counsellor to learn to behave in a more personally and socially satisfying manner. The assistance or help is principally given by the counsellor through the provision of information and the employment of good communication skills in order to create facilitative conditions which enhance the development of behaviours and attitudes that ensures optimum adjustment of the client.

From the above, it is clear that through counselling, the client applies knowledge

gained to acquire better coping skills relating to events in his life and the environment. According to New Zealand Association of Counsellors (2019), Merriam Webster Dictionary (2020) counselling is the process of helping and supporting a person to resolve personal, social, or psychological challenges and difficulties by a professional and well trained counsellor who helps the client(s) to see things more clearly, possibly from a different view point, supports client(s) to focus on feelings, experiences or behaviour that will facilitate positive change. It is relevant that this is established here that, counselling is not same as given advice to a client, or judgment or an attempt to sort out problem of the client as a counsellor neither take the counsellor's own view or opinion and way of coping.

Concept of Career Counselling

Kerala (n.d) puts it as the assistance given to an individual in solving problems related to vocational planning and to occupational choice and process with due regard for the individual's characteristics and their relation to occupational opportunities, Vaughan in Tor-Anyiin, Igbo and Akume (2008) viewed career counselling as the process of helping individuals to choose work in which they will be reasonably contented and successful within the limits of guidance that aims at helping the individuals with necessary information about themselves and various occupations so that they can make appropriate decisions concerning which occupation to choose. It is important to note that career counselling is not limited to career choice but it refers to preparation for entry and also adjustment in the job. So, career counselling is assistance in choosing a career or profession or in making employment or training decision. An example is a meeting with a consultant who helps people figure out what a good job would be for them based on their skills and qualifications (Vocational Guidance, n.d.).

Concept of Career Choice

Choice of a career is one of the most important decisions in an individual's life. Nigeria like many developing nations in Africa, most cases of underemployment, unemployment and un-employability experienced can be traced to improper career decisions on the part of the individuals.

This is due to improper articulation for a suitable occupation possibly as a result of lack of counselling service in schools as well as lack of self-assessment of the individuals in terms of aptitude, abilities, interests and or value systems. Denga (2019) sees career choice as deliberate and realistic decision made by an individual towards an occupation or vocation based on the person's attributes which include, talents, skills, values, aptitude and other personal characteristics. Denga further maintained that appropriate choice of career provides job satisfaction, job commitment and improves productivity of the individual and the nation at large.

The choice of career is a very necessary decision in the life of man. This statement is predicated on the premise that career choice determines one's lifestyle, his choice of friends, mode of dress, his influence in society as well as self-concept. It is therefore, important that students of library and information science in universities in Nigeria be helped to appreciate the constellation and complex interplay of issues involved before rational career choice is made, possibly by professional counsellors in counselling units/departments in universities in Nigeria. It is only by this approach that graduates of library and information science from Nigerian universities could choose work, occupation or vocations which they will be reasonably contented and successful based on the limits of their capacities. The position of this paper is that, careful career choice gives an individual the opportunity of choosing a career that will match his/her

interest and to an extent have a fulfilled life.

3.1 Concept of Library and Information Science Students in Nigeria

Library and information science students in this paper are the undergraduate students admitted into library schools in universities in Nigeria to study librarianship. Such that at the end of their study period in the universities, they may graduate with either BLIS, B.A. (LIS), B.Sc. (LIS), B. Tech. Library and Information Technology/Science and B.Sc. Library and Information Management (according to National Universities Commission 2014 Benchmark for minimum academic standard for library and information science). It appears the objectives of training library and information students in Nigerian universities is to produce librarians or information professionals for jobs in the library sector, as found in all types of libraries established in Nigeria. Though individual library schools or departments have specific objectives the general consensus for all library schools in Nigerian universities as maintained by Ochogwu (2018) are:

- * To produce information professionals who will be able to manage all type of libraries, archival institutions and documentation centers in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and largely a non-literate society such as the communities in rural Nigeria.
- * To produce library and information professionals with analytical minds about the information problems of Nigerians with a view to proffer solutions to them.

Apart from the above, the other objective is to produce library and information professionals with knowledge and skills to use the modern Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to locate, acquire, organize, store and

disseminate relevant and current information resources to Nigerians through their respective libraries, archival and documentation centers.

3.2 Need for Career Counselling Services for Library and Information Students in Nigerian Universities

In Nigeria over the years, there has been a sudden increase in students' enrolment in tertiary institutions. The influx of students in the institutions of higher learning in Nigeria implies a sudden increase in personal-social, educational and career problems (Denga, 2008). This is necessitated by the fact that the graduates need work to earn a living and to contribute their quota to the development of Nigeria. Unfortunately, the jobs are relative as a result, many of the graduates are either unemployed or underemployed. Notably, statistic has revealed that among those employed, 62% are misemployed for instance, in a study conducted by Kale and Doguwa (2015) revealed that a good number of workers in the banking sector of Nigerian economy did not at any point in time studied economic, business management, accountancy or banking and finance.

Though they are gainfully employed in banks in Nigeria, there is noticeable dissatisfaction and maladjustment among them. Such is the case in other sectors of Nigerian economy, hence the need for career counselling of students in Nigerian universities especially the library and information ones. Career counselling is required to achieve the following specific objectives. According to Denga (2019) career counseling could assist a person resolve career choice problem especially students in Nigerian universities library and information science ones inclusive.

Career counselling could help the students to know the problems and prospects of the different career paths thus the students can make an informed career choice and get a

career assessment that may assist them to avoid the risk of change in career path later in life. Therefore, career counselling is required to organize ones thoughts and ideas on career related decisions; hence it can significantly boost the moral, confidence and provide directions to the students which to a large extent can be beneficial for the larger society (Vaughan, 2009).

One of the basic aims of career counselling is to help students choose a field that is in tune with their skills and their job expectations. This implies that students need to be counselled in order to match their aptitude and personality that could translate into professional success and popularity. Thus, with the help of career counselling, most students end up choosing the right career and perform ultimately in their chosen career which gives them job satisfaction.

According to Akume, Igbo and Tor-Anyiin (2008) there are a number of reasons why career counselling is required for students in Nigeria. All the authors believed that career counselling is necessary for library science students in order to make the learners aware of the specific abilities, skills and other personal considerations necessary for the occupations they may desire to join in life. Related considerations such as sex, age, multi skills, height and qualification are the basic indices that the library and information science students need to be educated on in order to avoid entering into a wrong occupation or job where their joy or job satisfaction will be risked.

Other scholars such as Denga (2016) and Belkin (2011) have also maintained that career counselling service is necessary for students because such service may provide opportunities for students to gain experience of the work situation both in and out of school environment. This may allow the library and information science students discover their talents or abilities. With this situation, the students may turn to develop vocational

interest and when they finally get jobs they are seen to be productive, effective and efficient in their work places.

Apart from that, career counselling is needed by the library science students as, it enables the students acquire knowledge of available opportunities for training and the requirements for admission into institutes that provide the needed vocational training. Such knowledge could assist the students appreciate the cost of training, duration and other necessary requirements.

It is the position of this author that career counselling is needed by library and information science students because it could assist undergraduate and the graduate librarians prepare for a world of work such that when they finally find one, they will be productive and effective.

The author is also of the opinion that library science students need career counselling as it will certainly assist or help the undergraduate students appreciate the value of career choice so as to choose one when they finally graduate from the library schools in Nigerian universities.

In addition, through counselling services, library science students will appreciate the fact that opportunities for employment are available for them, the issue is making the choice based on personal characteristics and qualification. Most importantly too, is the fact that career counselling service can facilitate or encourage graduate and undergraduate students of the library profession to see the need to study their chosen courses seriously based on their aptitude (Rojewski, 1994).

Lastly, providing career counselling services to library science students could help them focus attention on particular jobs in order to assist the individual students crystallizes his preference among other preferred jobs for sustainability.

3.3 Hurdles to Career Choice

Choice of a career is one of the most difficult decisions in an individual's life. This decision is hard to make because of various problems associated with it. Moreover, it has tremendous impact on an individual's way of life, for instance his choice of friends, his income, dress code, the influence he has in the society among other considerations are tied to the decision-making. It is true that in Nigeria today, there are cases of underemployment and unemployment experienced by Nigerians. These can be associated with inappropriate decision-making on career choice on the part of the individual. According to Denga (2019) the complexity and uncertain job market in many countries whose economy is low have add to the difficulty of making an effective career choice. The following are some of the common hurdles to realistic career choice.

Given the socio-cultural mix, parents in Nigeria today have overwhelming influence on their children including those studying librarianship in Nigerian universities. It is based on this trend that Akume (2016) rightly maintained that most parents "want to relive their lives through their children" by imposing courses and careers on their children. That is, they try to make up what they failed to accomplish during their time through their children. For instance, parents who could not make it in medicine would certainly want their children become medical doctors.

It is for this obvious reason that we often find students in architecture course who ordinarily have the aptitude for engineering etc. This undue pressure or interference with career choice of youths by parents has serious vocational implication or maladjustment challenges on library and information science students too.

Another obstacle to career choice in Nigeria and among youths is the society's

attitude towards some occupations as rightly observed by Akume (2018) the society in which one lives has tremendous influence on one's career choice for instance, in many societies in Nigeria, a lot of respect is attached to traditional title holders as such, individuals tend to show preference for such careers or occupations that command societal recognition and prestige. In another instance, in Nigeria, for example teaching occupation is lowly rated due to probably the poor condition of service attached to the occupation. Contrary, not many youths would choose teaching as a career or occupation for a living. Hence it is generally noted that many young people tend to choose occupation based on the rating of such occupation by the society instead of their intrinsic satisfaction they would get from the occupation.

With the current global realities, students or youths and to be more specific library and information science students in Nigerian universities need to be counselled in order to be flexible towards their career choices. The reality of career choice demands that an individual should always consider his personal endowments in terms of attitudes, interest, ability and aptitudes as well environmental situations. In certain instances individual's preferred occupation may not be available in his environment. In such a situation, such individual should shift his choice of occupation to the next preferred alternative. In this situation as mentioned before, counsellors should help students to develop a hierarchy of occupational preference. This may help them to change from the most preferred to the second most preferred occupation as the situation may warrant, as inflexibility of career choice leads to one's frustration in the labour market.

Recommendations and Conclusion

This paper has dwelt on various concepts such as career counselling, career choice, library and information science

students in Nigerian Universities, it as well considered issues that hinder proper career choice of youths in Nigeria and the need for career counselling services for library and information science students.

The paper revealed that many Nigerians are either unemployed, underemployed or unemployable due to various reasons, the most obvious reason the paper maintained is lack of proper career counselling service for young adults while they were undergraduate students in the universities in Nigeria. This could be attributed to the fact that the Nigerian government is still at the stage of addressing the basic needs of Nigerian, people lack food, security, clothing etc. though government seems to have her priorities at every instance, the library profession, library educators, and all stakeholders in university education must be proactive and find ways to address the need for career counselling service for library and information science students in Nigerian universities for their sustainability.

In this regard, this paper recommends reawakening of career counselling service in all Nigerian universities where students would take advantage of the service. Students irrespective of discipline or programme of study in universities in Nigeria should be encouraged to always make safe assessment of their characteristics in term of their attributes before career choice is made.

Career counsellors should discourage library and information science students from peer influence, they should be educated on the danger of keeping groups or resist the temptation to make choices just because other members of the peer group are doing the same.

Students should be counselled on the need to make proper preparation for the occupation they would like to join while they are still undertaking their university education. Parents should stop influencing choice of career for their children at this stage

rather parents should encourage their children make choices based on their personal characteristics such as aptitude, interest etc. In light of the above recommendations, if they are considered, the issues of career choice, career counselling, changing jobs, job dissatisfaction, vocational maladjustment will be a thing of the past among professional library and information scientist in Nigeria.

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