

# Assessment of the Influence of Vocational Guidance on the Student Choice of Motor Vehicle Mechanic Trade in Technical Colleges of Niger State

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## Abstract

This study was designed to assess the influence of vocational guidance on the student choice of Motor Vehicle Mechanic Trade in Technical Colleges of Niger State. Three research questions were formulated to guide the study. A descriptive survey research design was employed for the study. The study was carried out in all the Technical Colleges in Niger State. A total of 435 respondents comprising 383 TCIII Motor Vehicle Mechanic students, 45 Motor Vehicle Mechanic teachers and 7 Principals in all the technical colleges in Niger state were used as population for the study. A structured questionnaire developed by the researcher was used to collect data for the study. The instrument was validated by 3 Lecturers in the Department of Industrial and Technology Education. Mean statistic was used to analyze the data for answering research questions. The findings of the study among others revealed that there are no physical facilities for effective vocational guidance services in most technical colleges, most parents forced their children to choose a career and that there are no qualified guidance counsellors in most technical colleges. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the concerned authorities should provide enough physical facilities that will enhance vocational guidance services in all the technical colleges, parents should not be allowed to be forcing their ward to choose a career and government should ensure that qualified guidance counsellors are employed in the technical colleges.

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## Keywords

Assessment, Guidance, Educational Guidance, Group Guidance, Vocational Guidance, Choice, Career or Occupation and Motor Vehicle Mechanics Trade.

## Introduction

Vocational guidance is a process of assisting individual to choose an occupation, prepare for it, and enter and progress in it. It is concerned primarily with helping individuals to make decisions and choices involved in planning a future and building a career. The purpose behind assisting the youth to choose, prepare, enter and progress in a vocation is the optimum growth of the individual. According to Osuala (1988), vocational guidance is a process of assisting an individual towards making a wise choice of an occupation or career, which will be beneficial to him and to society. It is primarily concerned with helping individuals to make decisions and choices involved in planning a future and building a career (Ezeji, 2001). Through vocational guidance, the individual is assisted to discover his abilities, interests and talents (Okrie & Ezeji, 1988). Justifying the need for vocational guidance in Nigeria schools, Okorie (2000) observes that a good number of children who go to school, leave the school before completion of the senior secondary education. Similarly, Osuala (1998) explained that many Nigerian youths today reach the termination of their high schools career, without having made any tentative occupational choice and that even the choices they make are often unrealistic in terms of their potentials and opportunities, as well as requirements of the world of work. Thus,

vocational guidance in schools has the potentiality to curb incessant cases of school dropout and wrong choice career.

The overall objectives of vocational guidance services in the school system according to Agarwal (2007) should be to assist the students to:

- ★ Identify their own talents, strengths and weakness, family expectations and national requirements to sort out the personal relevance of educational and vocational options available;
- ★ Understand the education and training options available and the requirement for admission and success, and select an appropriate field of study;
- ★ Understand the work options that are available, the qualifications requirement, the means of gaining entry, the life of the worker and the rewards of the jobs;
- ★ Translate information about self, educational opportunities and the world of work into short range and long range career goals;
- ★ Learn effective job search procedures;
- ★ Develop career adaptability for taking advantage of opportunities, as they occur;
- ★ Overcome self defeating behaviour, gain self confidence and learn life skills;
- ★ Cope with the reactions to job loss of anger, depression, frustration and apathy and learn to take continuing positive action to become employed again; and
- ★ Identify alternative occupations when the current employment is in jeopardy.

Okorie and Ezeji (1988) identified the various types of guidance services to include educational guidance, group guidance and vocational guidance. Vocational guidance is one of the guidance services available to the students in the school system. It is an important aspect of education. It is an essential part of a school and it works in equal partnership with the administration and instruction. It is a service required by the learners or the students. Guidance services according to Froehlich (1958) are those services which are designed to help the school adjust to the pupil and to help the pupil to make adjustment to the school and to life.

Froehlich (1958) further maintained that guidance services are facilitating services which try to help the school to do a better job of meeting pupil's needs. They also help the pupil to meet better the demands of school, his/her peer groups, members of his/her family and other adults.

Educational guidance according to Osuala (1998) relates to all aspects of education and is primarily concerned with the learner's success in his educational career. Osuala (1998) further explained that it is aimed at helping the learner to reach his potentialities in academic work by encouraging him to perform in terms of his abilities, plan courses of study in terms of his interest's aptitudes, abilities and future goals. Group guidance service deals with the activities of guidance programme in providing organised group services to help student acquire needed experience for intelligent (Okorie, 2000). Makinde (1983) maintained that group guidance is a process of assisting an individual to totally and successfully integrate in the society, overcome stressful situations and conform to societal norms and values. Vocational guidance provide opportunities for the individual students to select appropriate vocation or job, based on their abilities and interests. Through vocational guidance, facilities and encouragement are drawn to train individuals for a vocation. This service is, however, faced with certain challenges. The challenges for vocational guidance on the student's choice of occupation, according to Ohiweri & Nwosu (2009), includes the following: parental pressure or influence, economic and political condition of the country, peer groups' pressure or influence, inadequate vocational choice information, subject studies/combo, religious affiliation, job prospect, finance, sex stereotype of career and prestige attached to the job by the society. However, parental influence has been implicated in the career choice of students (Roe 1987, Adigwe 1981, Okeke 1996, Gesinde 1986). Okeke (1996) for example studied the relationship between parental occupations and their children's occupational preferences. He found that 60% of the children were willing to take up their father's occupation (medicine), while 23%

were willing to follow their mother's occupation (nursing). Gesinde (1986) on the other hand posits that parents influence is much more intricate and more pervasive than is shown. Students of secondary and tertiary institutions are often not aware of these influences and may accept the choice of their parents as theirs. The situation owes its origin to early childhood when the child grabs his parent's attitude towards different vocations. A conflict, therefore, occurs when the child submits to his parent's choice, while at the same time deeply resents his/her submissions as he/she becomes aware of his/her loss of independence and finds his/her area of interest. Furthermore, peer groups also have influence on the occupational choice of students. In the words of Hinchliffe (1973), friends are an important factor in the career choice of adolescents. Durojaiye (1970) also found that 76.5% of the students he studied said that their classmates would be employed in professional occupations just like them; while 24% said that their chosen jobs would be same as those of their friends.

Interest is also another important factor that influences the student's vocational choice. Owie (2003) stressed that the most important reason why a person chooses a particular career is that the person has intrinsic interest in the field. While this may be highly influenced by prior academic achievement, it is, however, expected that intrinsic interest remains a primary factor if the individual is going to be effective, satisfied and excel in the career. Where intrinsic interest is lacking, no amount of training motivation or gratification would significantly increase the person's professional effectiveness. He pointed out that a considerably large number of prospective teachers in this country have found themselves in colleges of education not because of a basic interest in teaching, but as a result of a complex combination of factors, such as poor secondary school academic records, and low JAMB scores. However a good number of students seem to prefer a career in teaching because they are intrinsically motivated and hence highly interested in the job.

Gender also plays a tremendous role in the

career choice of student, indeed this cannot be over emphasised. As in most parts of the country, the cultural role expectations of men and women are known to be clearly defined. Some studies have shown significant relationship between gender and occupational aspirations, preference and choice. In the Nigeria society, boys and girls often undergo different socialization experiences and they tend to learn different gender roles and behaviour patterns and hence develop different interests. These roles and interests later become the dominant factors in career choice. Gesinde's (1976) study also showed that gender plays an important role in determining the career preferences of students. Other research findings which support gender differences in career preferences and choices include the works of Yuh (1980) who in her study of some correlates of vocational orientations of Nigerian secondary students discovered that significantly more male students preferred realistic, investigative and enterprising careers, such as motor vehicle mechanic trade than the female students.

Motor Vehicle Mechanic trade is one of the Technical Vocational Education (TVE) programmes, which involves the acquisition of scientific knowledge in design, selection of materials, construction, operation and maintenance of motor vehicles. According to National Board for Technical Education (NBTE, 2001), Motor Vehicle Mechanics trade students should upon completion of the training be able to test, diagnose, service and repair any fault on conventional motor vehicle, and assemble main units and systems to the manufacturers' specifications. Abdulkadir (2011) explained that the objectives of the practical aspect of Motor Vehicle Mechanic trade at the technical college include to testing, rebuilding and replacing injector nozzles, dismantling and reassembling carburettor, following appropriate procedure, replacing major emission control components, diagnosing all problems relating to steering, troubleshooting problems in braking and suspension systems, etc.

Assessment is the process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse

sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experiences; the process culminates when assessment results are used to improve subsequent learning. According to Okoro (1991) assessment is a means of collecting and use of information to make decision about educational programme. He asserted that it is a determinant on how one is succeeding in achieving the aims and objectives in a given task, whenever a judgement is made about the effectiveness of the programme. Therefore, assessment in the context of this study is a systematic process of generating data about effectiveness of vocational guidance in the area of helping students in choosing Motor Vehicle Mechanic trade as a career at the technical college level for the purpose of making evaluative judgments.

The goals of vocational guidance in any school system should be to influence the individual to develop awareness about the world of work and thus enable him/her to adjust to the occupation. According to Okorie & Ezeji (1988), vocational guidance aims at forestalling mistakes by the individuals in making occupational decisions or choices that might later turn to be frustrating or disastrous to the individual. Through vocational guidance, students are given the opportunity to test their self-concept against the reality of a future occupation (Ezeji, 2001). According to Okorie (2000), vocational guidance in the schools has the potentiality to curb incessant cases of school dropout and wrong choice.

Unfortunately, most technical college students seem to be ignorant of their abilities to choose a career. Osuala (1998) lamented that many Nigerian youths today reach the termination of high school career without having made any tentative occupational choice, and even the choices that they make are often unrealistic in terms of their potentials and requirements for the world of work. Parental influences contributed in making or influencing wrong decision in the choice of career by the students, particularly technical section (James, 2006). Similarly, Mshellizah (2011) opined that

most parents forced their ward to choose a career against their wishes, making them slaves of their ambition and this make them to run away from technical trades, which Motor Vehicle Mechanic is an integral part of. It is not quite certain whether vocational guidance services available for the students may be responsible for these. The problem of this study, therefore, is to assess the influence of vocational guidance on the choice of Motor Vehicle Mechanic trade in technical colleges of Niger State.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess the influence of vocational guidance on the choice of Motor Vehicle Mechanic trade in technical colleges of Niger State. Specifically the study sought to:

1. Determine the influence of vocational guidance services in the choice of Motor Vehicle Mechanic trade as a career by the students in technical colleges.
2. Determine the problems affecting the vocational guidance services in the choice of Motor Vehicle Mechanic trade as a career by the students in technical colleges.
3. Identify the mechanisms that could be adopted to improve the vocational guidance services in the choice of Motor Vehicle Mechanic trade as a career by the students in technical colleges.

## Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What is the influence of vocational guidance services in the choice of Motor Vehicle Mechanic trade as a career by the students in technical colleges?
2. What are the problems affecting the influence of vocational guidance services in the choice of Motor Vehicle Mechanic trade a career by the students in technical colleges?
3. What are the mechanisms that could be adopted to improve the vocational guidance services in the choice of Motor Vehicle

Mechanic trade as a career by the students in technical colleges?

### Methodology

A descriptive survey research was adopted for this study. A total of 435 respondents comprising 383 TCIII Motor Vehicle Mechanic trade students, 45 Motor Vehicle Mechanic trade teachers and 7 Principals from all the technical colleges in Niger State formed the population for this study. Due to the less number of the population involved in the study, the entire population was used for study. Thus, no sampling technique was employed. A structured questionnaire developed by the researcher, named Vocational Guidance Student Career Choice Assessment Questionnaire (VGSCCAQ) and validated by three experts from Industrial and Technology Education Department was used for data collection. The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher to the respondents with the aid of research assistant appointed by the researcher in each of the technical college.

The questionnaire was assigned four points rating scale of strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). 435 copies of questionnaire were distributed to Motor Vehicle Mechanic students, and teachers and Principals and 367 copies were dully filled by the respondents and returned to the researcher, is 84.4% of the returned rate. Mean and Standard Deviation were tools used to analyze the data for answering research questions, t-test statistics was use to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. A mean score of 2.50 was used as a benchmark for accepting or rejecting items. Therefore, items with a mean score of 2.50 and above were considered as agreed; while items with mean score of 2.49 and below were considered as disagreed.

### Results

**Research Question 1:** What is the influence of vocational guidance services in the choice of vehicle mechanic trade as a career by the students in technical colleges?

**Table 1: Mean responses of Motor Vehicle Mechanic trade students, teachers and Principals on the influence of vocational guidance services on the choice of Motor Vehicle Mechanic as a career by the student of technical colleges**

$N_1 = 383$   $N_2 = 45$   $N_3 = 07$

S.No.	Items	$\bar{X}_1$	$\bar{X}_2$	$\bar{X}_3$	$\bar{X}_t$	Decision
1	Vocational guidance helps student in decision making about the career he/she wants to choose	3.62	3.65	3.63	3.63	Agreed
2	Vocational guidance assists students to secure knowledge of vocational training facilities in the school	3.48	3.47	3.42	3.46	Agreed
3	Vocational guidance assists students to secure vocational information needed for wise choice	3.47	3.38	3.21	3.35	Agreed
4	Vocational guidance assists students to choose an appropriate career based on his/her interest	3.50	3.36	3.54	3.47	Agreed
5	Vocational guidance helps to acquire knowledge of characteristics of available occupation	3.31	3.24	3.25	3.27	Agreed
6	Vocational guidance assists students to choose a career and make progress in it	3.51	3.61	3.58	3.57	Agreed

$N_1, N_2$  and  $N_3$  = Number of Motor Vehicle Mechanic students, and teachers and school Principals.

$\bar{X}_1$  = Mean responses of Motor Vehicle Mechanic students; teachers;

$\bar{X}_3$  = Mean responses of school Principals;

$\bar{X}_t$  = Mean responses of all respondents.

Analysis revealed that respondents agree with all items as influence of vocational guidance services in the choice of vehicle mechanic as a career by the students in technical colleges (table 1).

**Research Question 2 :** What are the problems affecting the influence of vocational guidance services in the choice of Motor Vehicle Mechanic trade as a career by the students in technical colleges?

**Table 2: Mean responses of Motor Vehicle Mechanic students, teachers and Principals on the problems affecting the influence of vocational guidance services in the choice of motor vehicle mechanic an occupation by the students in technical colleges**

$N_1 = 383$   $N_2 = 45$   $N_3 = 07$

S.No.	Items	$\bar{X}_1$	$\bar{X}_2$	$\bar{X}_3$	$\bar{X}_t$	Decision
1	Your school has no facilities for effective vocational guidance services	3.53	3.46	3.42	3.47	Agreed
2	Most parents influence their child in the choice of a career	3.45	3.46	3.38	3.43	Agreed
3	Most technical colleges are faced with the problems of inadequate vocational counsellors	3.26	3.29	3.38	3.33	Agreed
4	Strict adherence to religion and culture affect vocational guidance services in your school	3.53	3.56	3.42	3.50	Agreed
5	There is no provision for vocational guidance services in your school time-table	3.02	2.91	2.92	2.95	Agreed
6	Ignorance on the part of teachers and students affects full implementation of vocational guidance services	2.87	2.84	2.83	2.85	Agreed

$N_1, N_2$  and  $N_3$  - Number of Motor Vehicle Mechanic students, and teachers and school Principals.

$\bar{X}_1$  = Mean responses of Motor Vehicle Mechanic students; teachers;

$\bar{X}_3$  = Mean responses of school Principals;

$\bar{X}_t$  = Mean responses of all respondents.

Analysis revealed that respondents agree with all items as problems affecting the influence of vocational guidance services in the choice of Motor Vehicle Mechanic as a career by the students in technical colleges (table 2).

**Research Question 3 :** What are the mechanisms that could be adopted to improve the influence of vocational guidance services in the choice of Motor Vehicle Mechanic as a career by the students in technical colleges?

**Table 3: Mean responses of Motor Vehicle Mechanic students, teachers and Principals on the mechanisms that could be adopted to improve the influence of vocational guidance services in the choice of Motor Vehicle Mechanic as a career by the students in technical colleges**

$N_1 = 383$   $N_2 = 45$   $N_3 = 07$

S.No.	Items	$\bar{X}_1$	$\bar{X}_2$	$\bar{X}_3$	$\bar{X}_t$	Decision
1	Full knowledge of career opportunities in motor vehicle mechanic trade should given to students	3.04	2.94	3.08	3.02	Agreed
2	Qualified counsellors should be employed for vocational services in all technical colleges	2.90	2.94	3.00	2.95	Agreed
3	Vocational guidance officer should provide adequate opportunity for counselling interview for each student	3.42	3.32	3.29	3.34	Agreed
4	Records of school programme should be use as an opportunity for vocational guidance services	2.88	2.77	2.92	2.86	Agreed
5	Suitable and available information regarding career in different occupation should be made available to students	3.17	2.89	2.79	2.95	Agreed
6	Students should be exposed adequately to technical education and privileges in motor vehicle mechanic	2.94	2.71	2.88	2.84	Agreed
7	The facilities for medical examination of students should be part of vocational guidance services	2.92	2.79	3.13	2.95	Agreed

$N_1, N_2$  and  $N_3$  - Number of Motor Vehicle Mechanic students, and teachers and school Principals.

$\bar{X}_1$  = Mean responses of Motor Vehicle Mechanic students; teachers;

$\bar{X}_3$  = Mean responses of school Principals;

$\bar{X}_t$  = Mean responses of all respondents.

Analysis revealed that respondents agree with all items as mechanisms that could be adopted to improve the influence of vocational guidance services in the choice of Motor Vehicle Mechanic as a career by the students in technical colleges (table 3).

## Findings and Discussion

The findings, as contained in table 1, revealed that respondents agree with all the items as impact of vocational guidance services in the choice of Motor Vehicle Mechanic as a career by the students in technical colleges. This is in-line with the views of Ezeji (2001) who opined that vocational guidance is the assistance rendered in choosing, preparing for, entering upon and making progress in an occupation. Vocational guidance is intended to assists young people in choosing an occupation, preparing themselves for it, finding an opening in it, and building up a career of efficiency and success (Okorie & Ezeji, 1998). The researcher is of the opinion that

vocational guidance services should encompasses continuous and careful assessment of an individual's interest, ability, aptitude and potentials over a period using various sources of information from home and school as a reliable basis for guiding student towards a satisfactory career.

The findings, as contained in table 2, revealed that respondents agree with all items as problems affecting the vocational guidance services in the choice of Motor Vehicle Mechanic as a career by the students in technical colleges. This is in consonant with the views of Mshelizah (2011) who lamented that vocational guidance services in most technical colleges suffered from lack of physical facilities, such as offices, accommodation, textbooks, desk, and chairs for it effectiveness. Okorie (2000), also lamenting on the inadequate vocational guidance facilities, reported that one can hardly find in most schools facilities, such as audio, visual and audio-visual facilities and equipment necessary

for storing and disseminating information needed for effective vocational guidance services. As regards parental influence, this corroborate with views of Abubakar (2006) who stressed that most parents without vocational and occupational knowledge acts as vocational guidance counsellor to their children and thus influences them or force them to choose a career without taking into account their interest, attitudes, abilities and aspirations; hence the researcher is of the view that through vocational guidance, an individual should be assisted to discover his abilities, interests and talents.

The findings, as contained in table 3, revealed that respondents agree with all items as mechanisms that could be adopted to improve the vocational guidance services in the choice of Motor Vehicle Mechanic as a career by the students in technical colleges. This is in-line with the views of Mshelizah (2011) who explained that adequate and full knowledge of career opportunities in vocational technical education programmes, which Motor Vehicle Mechanic trade is an integral part, should be made available to students at technical college level. Qualified counsellors should be employed for vocational guidance rather than a unqualified person to fill the gap and that the records of progress of students should be used for vocational guidance, with due respect to the confidential character of information contained therein (Okorie & Ezeji, 1998). According to the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE, 2001) Motor Vehicle Mechanic graduates from Technical Colleges in Niger state and other states in Nigeria are expected to have acquired practical skills which can help them secure paid employment or set up their own workshop and be able to employ others. The researcher is of the view that suitable and reliable information concerning careers in different occupation and industries and regarding employment and training opportunities should be made available to young persons through vocational guidance services so that they can develop interest in choosing Motor Vehicle Mechanic trade at technical college level.

## Conclusion

The study has provided some evidence to draw the following conclusions:

- ★ The objectives of vocational guidance services were not achieved adequately in technical colleges, simply because of lack of physical facilities and qualified vocational guidance counsellors for providing effective guidance services. Accordingly, if the findings of this study are effectively utilized technical colleges students will be encouraged and motivated to choose motor vehicle mechanic as a career which will in turn lead to the production of highly skilled Motor Vehicle Mechanics.
- ★ Based on the findings of the study, the researcher would like to make the following recommendations:
- ★ Physical facilities, such as offices, textbooks, chairs, desks, should be provided for vocational guidance services for its effectiveness.
- ★ Parents should not be to be forcing their wards to choose a particular course of study as forcing them to choose a particular course has negative effects on their future career and performance.
- ★ Government should ensure that qualified vocational guidance counsellors are employed in the technical colleges to expose the students to a full-range of career opportunities.

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