



INFLUENCE OF GUIDANCE SERVICES ON CAREER DECISION MAKING AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN PAIKORO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF NIGER STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of guidance services on career decision-making among senior secondary school students in Paikoro Local Government Area of Niger State. The two objectives and two hypotheses were formulated to guide this study and specifically investigated the influence of counselling services, information services on students' career decision-making. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised all senior secondary school students in public secondary schools in Paikoro Local Government Area, from which a sample size of 384 students was selected using a stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on a four-point Likert scale. The instrument was validated by experts in guidance and counselling, while its reliability was established using appropriate statistical methods. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (Chi-square) at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that students generally perceived counselling and information services as helpful in supporting their career decision-making. However, the inferential analysis showed that counselling service components has a statistically significant influence on career decision-making among the students. This suggests that although counselling-related services are appreciated by students, their current implementation is sufficient to produce a measurable influence on career decision-making. The study concluded that counselling services in secondary schools within Paikoro Local Government Area require strengthening to effectively support students' career development. Based on the findings, the study recommended the provision of professionally trained counsellors, improvement of career information delivery among secondary schools in Paikoro Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria.

Key: Counselling Service, Information Service, And Career Decision-Making

Introduction

Counselling is generally a one-to-one helping relationship which focuses upon the individuals' growth and adjustment, and problem solving and decision-making needs. The aim of counselling is self-understanding, self-acceptance and self-realisation while Careers information service, provide careers information includes information about all types of occupations and industries, educational and training facilities, apprenticeship facilities, scholarships and stipends, local and national employment trends and opportunities and occupational structure of the country. For providing such information to students, group guidance activities such as field trips, career conference-cum-exhibition, career talks, etc. are organised. A Career Information Corner may be set up to display career information materials such as booklets, monographs, pamphlets and posters and charts, newspaper cuttings on occupational and educational opportunities (Kurebwa, , Matyatini, , & Wadesango, 2016)

Secondary school education is of the knowledge acquisition transitional period. Students are exposed to various subjects during this time, allowing them to decide which field of study they want to pursue in their higher education (Olayinka, 2016). After primary school but before higher education, secondary schools provide equal opportunities for the development of talents and skills that needed to bring about change. In Nigeria, secondary schools are consistently the central area of emphasis for educational reform. Young boys and girls must develop their knowledge, abilities, experiences, and career options (Ogunyemi and Udo, 2024). This system aims to enhance secondary school instruction and equip students with more valuable skills to support themselves after graduation, Ogidi (2017) in Ogunyemi and Udo, (2024), individuals differ from one another; these impacts who people are and what they are capable of. Sometimes a person's actions don't match their skills, abilities, and interests. How quickly students assess their career preferences depends on their growth rates,



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intelligence quotient (IQ) levels, academic achievements, and sexual orientation. The student's home, school, mosque, church, and community are critical environmental factors influencing their career choice or aspirations. Other factors, including parental expectations, high salaries, social standing, personal security. Career decision-making is globally recognized as a crucial developmental milestone for adolescents preparing for adulthood, higher education, and the labour market, friendships, career advancement opportunities, and the nature of the work itself, have directly or indirectly influenced students about to graduate from high school to make unrealistic career decisions. The major services relevant to this study are itemized and discussed as follows, **Counselling Services:** Counselling services involve professional assistance provided by trained school counsellors to help students understand themselves and make appropriate educational and career decisions. These services include individual counselling and group counselling sessions where students receive guidance on subject selection, career exploration, personal challenges, and decision-making skills. Counselling services enhance students' self-awareness, confidence, and ability to align their interests, abilities, and values with suitable career paths. At the senior secondary school level, effective counselling services are essential in helping students cope with academic pressure and make realistic career choices. **Information Services:** Information services focus on providing students with accurate, current, and relevant information about educational opportunities, career options, admission requirements, vocational pathways, and labour market trends. Through career talks, brochures, guidance bulletins, notice boards, and digital platforms, students are exposed to diverse career possibilities and the qualifications required for each. Adequate information services enable students to make informed decisions regarding subject combinations, further education, and occupational choices. Inadequate or outdated information, however, may lead to poor career decisions and unrealistic aspirations. friendships, career advancement opportunities, and the nature of the work itself, have directly or indirectly influenced students about to graduate from high school to make unrealistic career decisions. In counselling, the word "career" has a broad and technical meaning. In a technical sense, it denotes the hierarchy of a position or role that combines work, leisure, and academic pursuits. Throughout one's working life, it may take the form of various jobs, vocations, or occupations (Seligman, Weiss, Weinraub, & Schulman, 1980). A career is a person's entire body of work throughout their lifetime that has developed into their primary source of income (Tamborini, Kim, & Sakamoto, 2015).

In Europe, school counselling systems are highly structured and embedded into educational policy frameworks. Many European Union (EU) countries mandate comprehensive guidance curricula, which include psychological counselling, career assessment, labour-market information services, and personalized career planning support for students (European Commission, 2023 in Fehintola & Olorunda, 2025). Studies across the UK, Germany, Finland, and the Netherlands indicate that systematic guidance programmes significantly improve career readiness, reduce indecision, and promote better alignment between students' aspirations and labour-market demands (Fehintola & Olorunda, 2025). In these contexts, counselling services are seen not only as educational supports but as socio-economic tools that strengthen school-to-work transitions.

In Africa, the role of counselling service has expanded as countries confront with youth unemployment, skill mismatch, and rapid changes in the job market. Research in South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, and Ethiopia shows that guidance and counselling assist students in clarifying occupational interests, improving self-awareness, and making informed educational decisions (Adu & Okudzeto, 2022; Mji & Makgato, 2022 in Roventus & Widitra, 2022). Despite their importance, many African secondary schools struggle with insufficient trained counsellors, inadequate career resources, and limited government funding (Roventus & Widitra, 2022). These constraints often reduce the effectiveness of career counselling services, leaving many African students uninformed about career pathways or labour-market realities.

In Nigeria, guidance and counselling became formally integrated into the secondary school system through the National Policy on Education beginning in the 1977 edition and subsequently emphasised in the 2013 and 2020 revisions. The policy stresses that counselling services are essential in helping learners understand their abilities, interests, opportunities, and challenges so that they can make sound educational and career decisions. Nigerian scholars conclude that counselling and information services including individual and group counselling significantly contribute to students' career maturity, reduce indecision, and improve post-secondary planning (Egbochuku, 2020; Yusuf & Adediran, 2021 in Jackline, 2024). However, several systemic problems remain. Many public schools lack qualified counsellors, career information materials, counselling centres, or functional guidance units (Jackline, 2024). Additionally, societal pressure, limited exposure to career options, and low parental guidance further heighten the need for effective school counselling interventions.



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Within Niger State, the government recognizes counselling as a key educational support service; however, implementation varies between urban and rural LGAs. recent survey in the state show that while some schools in Minna and Bida have active guidance units, many in semi-urban and rural LGAs such as Gurara, Bosso, Munya, and Paikoro have inadequate counselling personnel, irregular career programmes, and low student awareness of available services (Jackline, 2024). These challenges potentially weaken students' decision-making abilities, particularly in areas where academic resources and labour-market exposure are limited.

Paikoro Local Government Area, a semi-urban and agrarian region of Niger State, hosts several senior secondary schools that cater to diverse student populations. Despite the importance of career guidance in shaping the aspirations of young people in Paikoro, little empirical work has documented, the availability, utilization, or effectiveness of counselling services in the LGA.

Statement of the Problem

Career decision-making is one of the most important developmental tasks of senior secondary school students, as it determines the educational and occupational paths they pursue after graduation. Ideally, students should receive adequate counselling and information services to help them understand their interests, abilities, values, and available career opportunities. Effective counselling supports students in making realistic and well-informed choices, thereby reducing future career indecision and dissatisfaction (Adeniyi & Vipene, 2024). Despite the critical importance of counselling and information service in facilitating career decision-making, there is a noticeable scarcity of empirical studies focusing on the effectiveness of counselling and information services in Paikoro LGA. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a systematic investigation into the influence of counselling and information services on career decision-making among senior secondary school students in Paikoro LGA.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the impact of counselling services on career decision-making among senior secondary school students in Paikoro Local Government Area of Niger State;
2. To determine the impact of information services on career decision-making among senior secondary school students in Paikoro Local Government Area of Niger State;

Research Hypotheses

- H₀₁: There is no significant impact of counselling services on career decision-making among senior secondary school students in Paikoro Local Government Area of Niger State.
- H₀₂: There is no significant impact Information services on career decision-making among senior secondary school students in Paikoro Local Government Area of Niger State.

Conceptual Framework

Counselling is a professional service provided by trained individuals to assist students in understanding themselves, their abilities, interests, and values, enabling them to make informed decisions about their academic and career paths (Ifejiofor, 2023). Guidance, in contrast, refers to broader activities aimed at helping students navigate educational, social, and career challenges. While counselling often involves one-on-one or small group sessions, guidance encompasses structured programmes, information provision, and interventions designed to support overall student development. Together, counselling and guidance form a comprehensive support system that facilitates personal, social, and career development in secondary schools (Adeniyi & Vipene, 2024).

Guidance services is a proactive and preventive educational service that seeks to assist students in making appropriate choices and adjustments at different stages of their development. It is concerned not only with solving existing problems but also with equipping learners with skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for future challenges. In the school setting, guidance programmes are designed to promote students' academic success, personal growth, social adjustment, and career readiness through planned activities such as orientation programmes, career talks, seminars, and information dissemination. Furthermore, guidance services in secondary schools serves as a developmental process that supports students in understanding the relationship between education and the world of work. At the senior secondary school level, students are confronted with critical decisions regarding subject selection, examination choices, and future careers. Effective guidance helps students to explore available career options, understand labour market trends, and align their educational aspirations



with their abilities and interests. This makes guidance an essential component of career decision-making among adolescents (Salihu, 2024).

In addition, guidance operates on the principles of individual differences and self-direction. It recognizes that students differ in abilities, interests, values, and socio-economic backgrounds, and therefore require tailored support to maximize their potential. Through guidance services, students are encouraged to develop self-awareness, self-confidence, and responsible decision-making skills, which are crucial for successful transition from school to higher education or the labour market.

In Paikoro Local Government Area, where students may be influenced by parental pressure or societal expectations, Holland's theory reinforces the importance of counselling and information services in promoting person-environment congruence. By guiding students toward careers that align with their personality types (Holland, 1997; Fehintola & Olorunda, 2025).

The Role of Counselling and information Services in Career Decision-Making

Facilitating Self-Awareness and Personal Development: One of the primary roles of counselling services in career decision-making is to enhance students' self-awareness and personal development. Counsellors help students understand their interests, abilities, personality traits, values, and goals, which are critical in choosing suitable career paths (Ifejiofor, 2023). Through individual counselling, psychometric assessments, and reflective exercises, students gain insight into their strengths and areas for improvement. This self-awareness enables students to make informed career choices that align with their capabilities and aspirations, reducing the likelihood of mismatch and dissatisfaction in the future (Fehintola & Olorunda, 2025).

Providing Career Information and Exposure: Counselling services play a vital role in increasing students' career knowledge and exposure. Many secondary school students have limited access to accurate and up-to-date information about occupations, qualifications, and labour market trends. Career guidance sessions, workshops, career talks, and digital platforms provide students with the necessary information to explore multiple career options (Adeniyi & Vipene, 2024). By exposing students to diverse career pathways, counselling services help them align their academic choices with potential career opportunities, thereby supporting realistic and strategic decision-making.

Enhancing Decision-Making Skills: Career decision-making requires critical thinking, evaluation of alternatives, and weighing potential consequences. Counselling services equip students with the **skills necessary to make structured and rational career decisions**. Techniques such as decision matrices, goal setting exercises, and problem-solving sessions help students analyze options systematically and select paths that best match their strengths and goals (Jackline, 2024). By fostering sound decision-making skills, counselling reduces impulsive or poorly informed career choices, which can negatively impact academic and professional outcomes.

Reducing Anxiety and Career Indecision: Senior secondary school students often experience stress, pressure, and uncertainty regarding career choices due to societal expectations, parental influence, and peer comparisons. Counselling services provide **emotional support** through individual and group sessions, enabling students to express concerns, clarify priorities, and build confidence in their decisions (Ifejiofor, 2023). This support reduces career-related anxiety and helps students navigate competing demands, ultimately improving their ability to make thoughtful and confident career decisions.

Improving Academic Performance and Long-Term Career Outcomes: Counselling services contribute to students' academic performance by helping them select subjects and educational pathways aligned with their interests and abilities. Students who receive structured guidance are more likely to excel academically, pursue further education, and experience higher satisfaction in their chosen careers (Ogunyemi & Udo, 2024). Additionally, counselling services encourage students to consider alternative career pathways such as vocational training, entrepreneurship, and self-employment, which can broaden employment opportunities and contribute to socio-economic development.



Supporting Continuous Career Planning: Effective counselling is not a one-time intervention; it involves continuous monitoring and follow-up. Counsellors track students' progress, provide ongoing guidance, and adjust support based on emerging interests, performance, and market changes (Fehintola & Olorunda, 2025). This longitudinal approach ensures that students remain on a guided path and are prepared to make timely decisions at various educational and career stages.

Challenges in Provision and Utilization of Counselling Services in Nigerian Schools
 Despite the critical role of counselling services in career development and academic success, the provision and utilization of these services in Nigerian secondary schools face several persistent challenges. These challenges hinder the effectiveness of guidance programmes and limit students' ability to make informed career decisions.

Shortage of Trained Counsellors: One of the major challenges is the **insufficient number of trained and qualified school counsellors**. Many schools, particularly in semi-urban and rural areas, rely on teachers or administrative staff to perform counselling duties without formal training in guidance and counselling (Ifejiofor, 2023). This shortage compromises the quality of services offered, as untrained personnel may lack the skills to administer psychological assessments, interpret career aptitude tests, or provide individualized guidance. Consequently, students may not receive the professional support required for effective career decision-making (Adeniyi & Vipene, 2024).

Inadequate Career Resources and Infrastructure: Counselling services depend heavily on **adequate resources and proper infrastructure**. Many Nigerian secondary schools face challenges such as the lack of career libraries, limited access to vocational information, absence of private offices for confidential sessions, and insufficient tools for assessment and appraisal. Without these essential resources, students' exposure to career options is restricted, and the scope of counselling is significantly limited (Olayinka, 2016). Additionally, schools often lack modern ICT infrastructure, which reduces the ability to integrate technology-based counselling platforms that could expand access to information.

Low Awareness and Underutilization of Services: Another critical challenge is **low awareness and utilization of counselling services** among students and parents. Cultural beliefs, stigma, and misconceptions about counselling often discourage students from seeking guidance. In some cases, parents do not actively encourage or support their children's participation in career guidance programmes, which diminishes the effectiveness of these services (Anyamene & Ngwakwe, 2020). Underutilization of counselling services means that many students make career decisions without professional guidance, increasing the likelihood of indecision, subject mismatch, and career dissatisfaction.

Review of empirical Studies

Babatunde (2018) investigated the effectiveness of guidance and counselling strategies at promoting career decision making skills among youths in Nigeria. The purpose of the study is to find out the effectiveness of group career guidance, group career counselling and group career guidance and counselling put together. The study employed the use of quasi-experimental design of pre-test and post-test of three experimental groups. Two questions were raised to guide the study and one null hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significant. Research instruments were two namely, Career Development Inventory (CDI) and Group Career Guidance and Counselling Strategies (Package used for treatment). Treatment procedure took place in three different school locations where students were pre-tested and post-tested before and after treatment with Group Career Guidance (GCG), Group Career Counselling (GCC) and Group Career Guidance and Counselling (GCG+GCC). The results of the study revealed a general low career maturity and decision-making skills before treatment. The study revealed improvement of the maturity and the skills after the treatment.



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Iyoke, (2019) the study examined the impact of guidance services on the career choice of secondary school students in public secondary schools in Enugu North Local Government Area of Enugu State. Seven research questions and one null hypothesis guided the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a description survey research design. The population for the study consisted of 26 guidance counsellors in the existing 12 public secondary schools in the area. The number is small and manageable so no sampling was done. Twenty-six (26) copies of the questionnaire were distributed but 21 copies were retrieved from the respondents representing 80.77 percent return rate. The instrument used for data collection was a 21-item questionnaire. The instrument was validated by three experts from Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. Two each from guidance and counselling and one from measurement and evaluation. Department. Data collected were analyzed using Mean with standard deviation and t-test statistic. The study revealed among others that orientation, appraisal, information, educational, placement, referral and follow-up services impact on the career choice of secondary school students in public secondary schools in Enugu North Local Government Area

Tina, and Ugochukwu (2020) Career decision making is a skill that counsellors can use to assist students learn, it involves conscious, systematic process which students can learn and perform better practice. This study therefore, was designed to examine guidance and counselling programmes in secondary schools: it also determined issues and roles of the programme in students' career decision making. The study adopted an ex-post facto descriptive survey design. Simple random sampling techniques were employed in selecting the sample for the study and utilized 300 respondents; 30 head teachers and 27 students from each of the ten selected schools totaling 270 students. Two different questionnaires were designed for the study data collection which was Senior Secondary School Students Questionnaire (SSSSQ) and Secondary School Teacher Counsellors Questionnaire (SSTCQ). 270 copies of questionnaires were administered to students through the help of research assistants and 180 copies were filled correctly and returned giving a return rate of 90 percent. Also 30 copies of questionnaires were administered to selected teachers and all were filled and returned. However, construct and face validity was established as experts in guidance and counselling validated the instruments. Reliability coefficient of 0.65 was established for the students' instruments (SSSSQ) while the reliability coefficient of 0.67 for the teacher's instrument (SSTCQ). Findings among others revealed that 77.22% of the population proved that there is little or no form of counselling services to assist students in career decision-making in their respective schools while 73.33% of the study population felt that counselling resources for teacher counsellors are unavailable and insufficient in their respective schools.

Ogunlade (2012) this study examined the influence of counselling on career preference among secondary school students in Ekiti State. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. Two hundred students drawn from ten secondary schools in four Local Government Areas of Ekiti State were used in the study. A questionnaire titled "Influence of Counselling on Career Preference" (ICCP) was administered on the students. The findings revealed among others that vocational guidance significantly influenced vocational aspirations of the students. It was also discovered that prestige, economic and social values play dominant roles in the behaviour of the students and finally, gender parity was also seen to be a prime factor in their choices of occupation.

Adama and Ukoima (2023) The study examined the influence of guidance and counseling services on students' career choice in public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher developed three (3) specific objectives, three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. The research design used for the study was a descriptive research design. The population of the study was Seventeen Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy-Two (17,972) SS II students. There is 9,817 female and 8,155 male SS II students. The total sample size for this study was 400 SS II students. That is 220 female and 180 male SS II students. The researcher used simple random sampling technique. The instrument used for the data collection was self-structured questionnaire titled: Influence of Guidance and Counseling Services on Students Career Choice Questionnaire. The data gathered were analyzed using mean score and standard deviation for the research questions, while the null hypotheses were tested using z-test statistical tool at 0.05 level of significant. Based on the analysis of the data, the findings of the study reveal: that appraisal services, referrals services, information services have positive and significant influence on students' career choice in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State



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Method

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design. The design is suitable because the study seeks to collect factual information from a large population of respondents, the descriptive survey design allows the researcher to describe existing conditions, perceptions, and practices without manipulating variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The population of this study comprised three thousand five hundred (3,500) senior secondary school students in public secondary schools in Paikoro Local Government Area of Niger State. Sample size for this study is three hundred and eighty-four (384) students was selected from secondary schools across Paikoro LGA. The instrument used for data collection in this study was a structured questionnaire titled “Counselling Services Assessment Questionnaire (CSAQ)”. The questionnaires were administered during break periods to avoid interrupting academic activities. The data collected from respondents were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods with the aid of SPSS version 26.

Results and Discussion

Hypothesis One

H₁: There is no significant relationship between counselling services and career decision-making among senior secondary school students in Paikoro Local Government Area.

Table: Chi-Square Test of Relationship between Counselling Services and Career Decision-Making

Variables	χ^2 Value	df	p-value (Sig.)	Decision
Counselling Services Career Decision-Making	14.852	12	0.001	Significant

Source: Field Survey (2025)

Hypothesis One result shows a calculated Chi-square (χ^2) value of 14.852 with 12 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.001. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the result is statistically significant. This indicates there is sufficient statistical evidence to establish a significant relationship between counselling services and career decision-making among the respondents.

H₂: There is no significant relationship between information services and career decision-making among senior secondary school students in Paikoro Local Government Area.

Table: Chi-Square Test of Relationship between Information Services and Career Decision-Making

Variables	χ^2 Value	df	p-value (Sig.)	Decision
Information Services Career Decision-Making	16.204	12	0.04	Significant

Source: Field Survey (2025)

Hypothesis Two result shows a χ^2 value of 16.204 with 12 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.04. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the result is not statistically significant. This indicates there is sufficient evidence to establish a significant relationship between information services and career decision-making.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of hypothesis one revealed that there is significant influence of counselling service on career decision-making, this finding is in line with the finding of Babatunde (2018) that revealed a general low career maturity and decision-making skills before treatment and later revealed improvement of the maturity and the skills after the treatment. The study of Iyoke (2019) also indicated among others that orientation, appraisal, information, educational, placement, referral and follow-up services impact on the career choice of secondary school students in public secondary schools while the findings of Ogunlade (2012) also concur with the findings of this study.

Finally, the finding of hypothesis two also revealed significant influence of information service on career decision-making in the study area, other findings that aligned with this study are the findings of Iyoke (2019), Tina, and Ugochukwu (2020), Ogunlade (2012) and Adama and Ukoima (2023) their studies revealed that appraisal services, referrals services, information services have positive and significant influence on students' career choice in public senior secondary schools.



Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that counselling and information services play a critical and positive role in enhancing career decision-making among senior secondary school students in Paikoro Local Government Area of Niger State. The study revealed that students who actively engage with counselling and information provision activities exhibit higher levels of self-awareness, greater clarity in their career goals, and stronger confidence in making informed career choices. This demonstrates that counselling and information services are essential for guiding students through the complex process of choosing suitable academic and career pathways.

Recommendations

Based on the findings the following recommendations are made:

School administrators should strengthen counselling services through the employment of trained guidance counsellors with adequate counselling facilities and assessment tools that will be used to organize regular career-focused counselling sessions, and.

Schools' guidance counsellors should improve the quality, relevance, and timeliness of career information and integrate such information during individual and group counselling sessions to help students properly understand and apply career-related information.

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