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## Differential Effects of Vocational Guidance on Preferred Choice of Tertiary Education among Male and Female Secondary School Students in Rivers States, Nigeria

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### **Abstract:**

*The study investigated the differential effects of vocational guidance on preferred choice of tertiary education among male and female secondary school student in Rivers State. The study utilized the pre-test, post-test quasi-experimental research design. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. The population consist of 34,209 SS3 students in public secondary school for 2016/2017 academic session. A multistage sampling technique was used to draw 136 students identified as dysfunctional in their choice of tertiary education in three secondary schools in the three senatorial zones of Rivers State. Motivation for tertiary education preference scale MTEPS was the outcome measure used. Its face and content validity were ensured by experts in guidance and counselling while its reliability was ensured through the test re-test method for a measure of stability using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient test and it yielded a co-efficient value of  $r$  0.93. The data obtained from the outcome measure was analysed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions and independent t-test for the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Result indicated that male and female students in the experimental group improved over their male and female counterparts in the control group in their preference for University Education. It was recommended amongst others that; male and female secondary school students should be constantly exposed to vocational guidance and counselling in order to expose them to diverse information that will enable them make more informed decisions in their choice of tertiary education.*

**Keywords:** Counselling, female/ male, preferred choice, tertiary education, vocational guidance

### **1. Introduction**

Student in Rivers state just like their counterparts in other parts of Nigeria have an overwhelming preference for University education at the neglect of other tertiary institutions. The benefits derivable from other tertiary education options is never considered in their choices, for many, other tertiary educations are meant for the never do wells. University education is seen as a means to an end by many students judging from their choice pattern irrespective of the availability of their courses in other tertiary institutions like Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and other institutions. University Education has continuously been the preferred choice of many students. Joint Admission and Matriculations Board (JAMB) statistics for 2017 revealed that candidates who registered for the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) rose from 1.5million to 1.8 million within three years while admission spaces have remained static. The only increment in admission spaces were derived from private universities and few state Universities. Of-course, many parents and students are unwilling to patronise private Universities due to financial implications and other individual considerations. Available spaces for all tertiary educations stand at 850,000 but over one million candidates continue to scramble for university admission. (source: [www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com) 2017). Although, all UTME candidates under Professor Ishad Oloyede administration have been mandated to choose one college of education, Polytechnic and University, however, it is not clear how many admission seekers are willing to settle for polytechnic education and others. Many who spoke to vanguard insisted that they would rather study education in the university than in colleges of Education. Perhaps, if the federal Government removes the disparities between the university and polytechnic graduates, maybe many students will accept the offer, thereby reducing the number of candidates that crave for university education. The researchers are utilizing the instrument of Vocational Guidance and Counselling to see how it can change the mind set of students towards University Education preference.

Awujo, Agbakwuru and Kennedy (2017) defined choice of tertiary education as choosing a tertiary education from a long list of several others such as Universities, colleges of education, Polytechnics, Mono-technics and other specialized institutions such as school of nursing, school of Agriculture etc. On the other hand, Gladding (2011) defined vocational

guidance as a process of helping students to make decisions on academic and vocational matters and referring personal/emotional problems to other agencies. In the same vein Ogbodo (2009) conceived vocational guidance as a specialized guidance service that focuses on helping students and adults alike make valid educational and occupational plans and decisions. Crites in Kemjika (2008) says 'no matter how the subject of vocational guidance is defined, it is first and foremost a facilitative process meant to help the individual effectively choose and adjust to an occupation. Meyers as cited in National Career Development Association Ethical standards (2003) states that Vocational Guidance and Counselling is made of experimental activities and procedures that spans over time. He said the primary concern of Vocational Guidance and counselling is the help giving to an individual in making decisions and choices essential in planning a future and building a career, these decisions and choices are required to affect a pleasing vocational adjustment.

The researcher believes that the instrument of Vocational Guidance can be used to help students make diverse tertiary education choices to fulfill their career dreams instead of waiting endlessly for University education with limited spaces.

Nwachukwu (2007) believes that lack of knowledge of possible viable alternative has made first choice a life or death issue which explains the current high rate of university admission fraud, certificate racketeering and high examination malpractice. The students need to be helped to appreciate all the allied tertiary education training opportunities in a chosen field for self-fulfilment. The after effect of unfulfilled life expectation when a particular choice is unobtainable leads to a destabilized life. An inappropriate Choice may spell ruin for the individual and force the society to function below the level of maximum efficiency. This has been one of the more compelling arguments in favour of making vocational guidance available in secondary schools (Prochaska & Norcross, 2007). The overwhelming interest of secondary school students towards university education at the neglect of other tertiary educations which have similar goals necessitated the need for this experimental study to ascertain if vocational guidance can exact any differential effect on male and female students choice of tertiary education having been used successfully to ascertain its effectiveness locally in Rivers state to ascertain its effectiveness among students. It is against this background that this study is conceived.

### *1.1. Statement of the Problem*

An overwhelming majority of secondary school students are largely unrealistic in their educational aspirations and preferences due to lack of adequate information. Information is the core of vocational guidance. The overwhelming preference for university education with limited spaces at the neglect of other tertiary education pathways where they have greater prospects in gaining admission to fulfil their career dreams has been an issue of great concern worthy of experimental investigation. Although, previous studies conducted by Awujo and Kennedy (2015), Awujo, Agbakwuru and Kennedy (2017), Awujo and Kennedy (2017) have proved beyond reasonable doubt that vocational guidance has a strong influence on students preferred choice of tertiary education among secondary school students in Rivers State, It is not clear if vocational guidance equally have differential effects on male and female secondary school students preferred choice of tertiary education. Given the above the researcher decided to investigate the 'Effects of vocational guidance and counselling on male and female students preferred choice of tertiary education in Rivers State' this is the foundational problem of this study.

### *1.2. Empirical Review of Literature*

Awujo et al (2017) investigated the effects of Vocational Guidance and Solution Focused-Brief Therapy on preferred choice of Tertiary Education among Senior Secondary Students in Rivers State using a sample size of 140 students chosen from four schools in the state. Students were randomly placed into two unequal groups experimental and control group. Results indicated that Vocational Guidance had significant effects on preferred choice of tertiary education among SS3 students in Rivers State as the experimental group improved over their control group counterparts by choosing other tertiary educations as preferred choice. In a related development Awujo and Kennedy (2017) investigated the Effects of a blend of Vocational Guidance and Solution focused brief therapy on preferred choice of tertiary education among senior secondary school students in Rivers state with a sample size of 113 students from four senior secondary schools in the state. Students were randomly placed into two unequal groups and were treated in their respective schools, one experimental and one control group were formed. Results indicated that a blend of Vocational Guidance and Solution focused brief therapy had significant effect on preferred choice of tertiary education among secondary school students in Rivers State as determined by their pre-test and post-test results. The experimental group dropped the overwhelming preference for University Education by indicating preference for other tertiary education in their choices. In a study conducted by Agbakwuru and Kennedy (2017) investigating the Effects of Solution Focused Brief Therapy on Preferred choice of tertiary education among senior secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria using a sample size of 119 students with dysfunctional choice of tertiary education from four secondary schools in the state. Students were randomly placed into experimental and control group and treated in their respective schools. Results shows that, the treatment factor solution focused brief therapy produced a significant change over the control group as specified by pre-to-post intervention outcome.

Awujo and Kennedy (2015) investigated the effects of Vocational Guidance on secondary school students choice of tertiary education in Okrika local Government Area of Rivers State with a sample size of 200 senior secondary school students in the LGA, using a pre-test, post-test quasi experimental study design with the college aspiration inventory (CAI) as the outcome measure. Result indicated that vocational guidance had an effect on students' aspiration to tertiary education positively as students indicated interest in diverse tertiary education options at the end of the treatment period. All these studies have gone a long way to prove that vocational guidance has a strong influence on students' choice of

tertiary education. It is not clear if Vocational Guidance can differentially influence male and female students preferred choice of tertiary education, based on this uncertainty the researcher decided to investigate the Effects of Vocational Guidance and counselling on male and female students' preferred choice of tertiary Education in Rivers State.

### 1.3. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of vocational guidance and counselling on preferred choice of tertiary education among male and female senior secondary school students (SS3) in Rivers State, while the objectives are to;

- Determine the differential effects of vocational guidance and counselling on preferred choice of tertiary education among male and female students in the experimental group as determined by their pre-test and post-test mean scores.
- Find out the differential effects of vocational guidance and counselling on preferred choice of tertiary education among male students in the experimental group and female students in the control group as determined by their post-test mean scores.
- Find out the differential effects of vocational guidance and counselling on preferred choice of tertiary education among female students in the experimental group and male students in the control group when their post-test mean scores are compared.

### 1.4. Research Questions

The following research questions were answered to guide the study;

- What are the differential effects of vocational guidance and counselling on preferred choice of tertiary education among male and female students in the experimental group as measured by their pre-test and post-test mean scores?
- What are the differential effects of vocational guidance and counselling on preferred choice of tertiary education among male students in the experimental group and female students in the control group when their post-test mean scores are compared?
- What are the differential effects of vocational guidance and counselling on preferred choice of tertiary education among female students in the experimental group when their post-test mean scores are compared to that of their male counterparts in the control group?

### 1.5. Hypotheses

The following three corresponding null hypotheses were stated, and tested at 0.05 level of significance to guide the study;

- Vocational Guidance And Counselling have No Significant Differential Effects On Male And Female Students Preferred Choice Of Tertiary Education When The Pre-Test And Post-Test Mean Scores Of The Experimental Group Are Compared.
- Vocational Guidance And Counselling have No Significant Differential Effects On Preferred Choice Of Tertiary Education Among Male Students In The Experimental Group And Female Students In The Controlgroup When Their Post-Test Mean Scores Are Compared.
- Vocational Guidance And Counselling Have No Significant Differential Effects On Preferred Choice Of Tertiary Education Among Female Students In The Experimental Group when Their Post-Test Mean Scores Are Compared To That Of Their Male Counterparts In The Control Group.

## 2. Methodology

The study adopted the pre-test, post-test quasi-experimental research design. The greatest of the conditions that call for the use of quasi-experimental research according to Kpolovie (2010) is when total randomization cannot be applied to control all known and unknown extraneous variables required for true experimentation. In the same vein Nwankwo in Nwankwo (2013) defined quasi-experimental study as 'a study in which some threats to validity cannot be properly controlled because of unavoidable situations associated with the study when human beings are used for experimental study' The researchers are convinced that, the pre-test, post-test quasi-experimental design is the most appropriate for this present study.

The target population for this study consist of all the SS3 students in all the senior public secondary schools in Rivers State for 2016/2017 academic session. As at the time of this study the total number of SS3 students in the state was 34,269 (Source: State ministry of education).

A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to choose the sample for the study, Students from one school in each senatorial zone were chosen for the study, one boys school (Kalabari National college, Buguma), one girls school (Government Girls' secondary school OkumgbaAma, Okrika) and one co-educational school (Community Secondary School Ubima). At the end 136 students were identified as dysfunctional in their choice of tertiary education and they formed the sample for the study.

The instrument used for data collection is a non-achievement-oriented instrument, adapted from Motivation for Occupational preference scale (MOPS) and re-named Motivation for Tertiary Education Preference Scale (MTEPS). The instrument was in 3 sections accompanied with a transmittal letter which specified the essence of the study. Section A was the personal data section indicating name of student, school, Local Government Area and class, while section B elicits

information such as 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> choice of tertiary education preferred (preferred institution type) and willingness to accept admission offer from other tertiary institutions while section C consisted of 16 self-report items indicating reasons for preferred choice of tertiary education. It is segmented into 4 parts (A – D) for purpose of identification of those with unhealthy choices, the items on the instrument were responded to on a 4 points scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD) with scores ranging from 4 – 1. The 16 items on the scale gives a maximum of 64 points and a minimum of 16 points thus any instrument with a minimum of less than 16 marks and a maximum of more than 64 marks was not properly filled and was discarded. The valid scripts (instruments) were further subjected to data analysis procedure. Face and content validity were established by test experts and experts in guidance and counselling while the reliability of the instrument was determined through the test-re-test method for a measure of stability. Stratified random sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 30 SS 3 students outside the sampled schools in Rivers State for the reliability test. Copies of the instrument were administered to the sample in their respective schools after establishing a good rapport with them, they were requested to respond to all the items of the instrument as it applies to them as honestly as possible, and it was done and retrieved on the spot. After an interval of three weeks a retest was given to the same sample to respond. The initial and retest scores were correlated using the Pearson Product Moment correlation co-efficient test which yielded a coefficient value of 'r' 0.93 which was adjudged high for utilization.

The face to face method was used to administer the instrument after counselling process. The scores obtained from the instrument were analysed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions and Independent T-test for the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

### *2.1. Experimental Procedure*

The experimental procedure was divided into three stages.

#### 2.1.1. Stage 1 – Pre-test Administration

The researcher administered the motivation for tertiary education preference scale (MTEPS) to all the SS3 students in each of the sampled three schools in the three senatorial zones in their respective schools.

#### 2.1.2. Stage 2 – Scoring of the Pre-test

The researcher scored the responses of students on each item on MTEPS in all the three sections. Students who chose university as their first and second choice and also say 'NO' to admission offer to other tertiary institutions in section B where identified as students who need counselling. The implication of this is that these students have seen university as a 'DO' or DIE' affair.

Again those who score 9 – 16 in section 1, 2, 3 were also identified for counselling but those who scored 9 – 16 in section 4 and 4 – 8 in sections 1, 2, 3 were identified as healthy in their preferred choices. After painstakingly scoring the pre-test, 136 SS3 students were spotted as having unhealthy dysfunctional choice of tertiary education and they were used for the study.

#### 2.1.3. Stage 3 – Placement of Subjects into Experimental and Control Groups

Those who were identified as being healthy in their preferred choices were exempted from the experiment while those who were identified as needing counselling that is, those who see university education as a do or die affair were placed into experimental and control groups through random placement of schools. Students from the boys and girls schools were placed in the experimental group to benefit from vocational guidance and counselling while students from the co-educational school were placed in the control group.

### *2.2. Treatment Procedure Took Three Phases as Follows*

- Phase 1 – Pre-treatment phase
- Phase 2 – Treatment Phase
- Phase 3 – Post Treatment Phase

#### 2.2.1. Phase 1 – Pre-treatment Phase

At this phase MTEPS was administered to all the two groups experimental and control group. The pre-test was administered a week ahead of the treatment.

#### 2.2.2. Phase 2-Treatment Phase

The researcher commenced group counselling sessions of 1 hour once a week for the experimental group for four weeks. Since information is the core of vocational guidance and counselling students were exposed to basic information based on the world of work and the world of academics. Boys and Girls were treated in their respective schools. The control group was exposed to No – treatment

#### 2.2.3. Phase 3 – After Treatment Procedure

Treatment Lasted for four weeks. The researcher waited for two weeks to elapse before re-administering the MTEPS to all the two groups (control and experimental groups) in order to ascertain the differential effects of the treatment on preferred choice of tertiary education among male and female students. Before the re-administration of the test, the statements were reshuffled serially from section D to A to guide against easy recall in order to authenticate the

treatment thereby preventing other extraneous variables from intervening. The pre-test and post-test scores were recorded and used for data analysis. Data was analysed using mean, standard deviation and the independent t-test.

### 3. Results

Research Question 1; What is the differential effect of vocational guidance and counselling on preferred choice of tertiary education among male and female students in the experimental group as measured by their pre-test and post-test mean scores?

To answer this research question, the pre-test and post-test mean scores of male and female students in the experimental and control group were presented on table 1 and extracted to answer each research question.

Pre-test Mean Scores/Standard Deviation				Post-test Mean Scores/ Standard Deviation			
Group	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd	Mean difference
Male students in experimental group	37	58.8	5.8	37	28.9	3.2	29.9
Female students in experimental group	37	58.3	5.7	37	28.3	3.1	29.4
Male students in control group	31	56.2	5.6	31	55.9	5.2	0.3
Female students in control group	31	58.8	5.8	31	58.3	5.7	0.5
Total	136			136			

*Table1: Pre-Test and Post-Test Mean Scores and Standard Deviation for the Experimental and Control Group*

Table 1 reveals that the post-test mean scores of the experimental group showed a tremendous improvement over the pre-test after treatment with a pre-test mean score of 58.8 for the males and a post-test mean score of 28.9 after treatment while their female counterparts had 58.3 before treatment and 28.3 after treatment this goes a long way to show the gains of vocational guidance and counselling with a mean score difference of 29.9. The answer to research question s1 is that: Vocational Guidance and counselling has effect on male and female students preferred choice of tertiary education

- Research Question 2: What is the differential effect of Vocational Guidance and counseling on preferred choice of tertiary education among male students in the experimental group and female students in the control group as measured by their post-test mean scores?

To answer this research question the post-test mean scores and standard deviation scores of the male students in the experimental group and female students in the control group were extracted from table 1 as follows, mean score for male students in the experimental group was 28.9 and a standard deviation of 3.2 while the female students in the control had a mean score of 58.3 and a standard deviation of 5.7 respectively. The answer to research question 1 is: There is a differential effect of vocational guidance and counselling on preferred choice of tertiary education among male and female students in the experimental and control group.

- Research Question 3: What is the differential effect of vocational guidance and counseling on preferred choice of tertiary education among female students in the experimental group and male students in the control group when their posttest mean scores are compared?

To answer this research question, the post-test mean scores of the female students in the experimental group and the male students in the control groups were extracted from table.1 and compared.

Table 1 shows that the post-test mean score for females in the experimental group was 28.3 with a standard deviation of 3.1 while their male counterparts in the control group had 55.9 and 5.2 as post-test mean score and standard deviation respectively. The result clearly showed that, female students in the experimental group improved over their male counterparts in the control group. The answer to research question 3 therefore is, there is a differential effect of vocational guidance and counselling among female students in the experimental group and male students in the control group when their post-test mean scores are compared.

- Hypothesis 1: Vocational guidance and counselling has no significant differential effect on male and female students in the control group on preferred choice of tertiary education when their post-test mean scores are compared.

Sex	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd	Df	t-Crit	t-cal	P	Decision
Male in Experimental group	37	28.9	3.2	72	1.990	1.1	0.05	Accept Ho
Female in Experimental group	37	28.3	3.1					
Total	74							

*Table 2: t-Test Summary for Null Hypothesis Testing on Post-Test Mean Scores of the Experimental Group Male and Female Students*

Table 2 clearly shows that the calculated t-test value of 1.1 is lower than the critical t-test value of 1.990 at degree of freedom of 72, significant at 0.05 level this therefore, calls for the acceptance of  $H_0$ . This suggests that vocational guidance and counselling has no significant differential effect on male and female students preferred choice of tertiary education when the post-test mean scores of the experimental group is compared.

- Hypothesis 2: Vocational Guidance and Counselling has no significant differential effect on preferred choice of tertiary education among male students in the experimental group and female students in the control group when their post-test mean scores are compared.

Sex	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd	Df	t-Crit	t-cal	P	Decision
Experimental group male	37	28.9	3.2					
Control group female	31	58.3	5.7	66	1.994	25.6	0.05	Reject $H_0$
Total	68							

*Table 3: t-test Summary for Null Hypothesis Testing on Experimental Group Male and Control Group Female Post-Test Mean Scores*

Table 3 shows that the calculated t-test value of 25.6 is far higher than the critical value of 1.994 at 0.05 level of significance with a df of 66, this calls for the rejection of the null hypothesis, this therefore, suggest that there is a significant effect of vocational guidance and counselling on preferred choice of tertiary education among male students in the experimental group when compared to female students in the control group.

- Hypothesis 3: Vocational guidance and counselling has no significant differential effects on preferred choice of tertiary education among female student in the experimental group and male students in the control group when their post-test mean scores are compared.

Sex	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd	Df	t-Crit	t-cal	P	Decision
Experimental group female	37	28.3	3.1					
Control group male	31	55.9	5.7	66	1.994	21	0.05	Reject $H_0$
Total	68							

*Table 4: t-test Summary for Null Hypothesis Testing on Experimental Group Female and Control Group Male on Post-Test Mean Scores*

Table 4 clearly reveals that the calculated t-test value of 21 is higher than the critical value of 1.994 at 0.05 level of significance with a degree of freedom of 66, this therefore, calls for the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests that, vocational guidance and counselling has a significant effect on preferred choice of tertiary education among experimental group females and the control group males.

#### 4. Discussion on Findings

The first finding indicates that Vocational Guidance and Counselling has a significant effect on preferred choice of tertiary education among male and female students in the experimental group. It was observed that the mean scores of students that were high before exposure to vocational guidance and counselling reduced drastically after exposure to counselling. This finding is expected and not surprising because the role of vocational guidance and counselling is to provide exposure and knowledge to students to empower them make more suitable educational and vocational choices when necessary. It is not aimed at pressurizing the individual into making choices but to expand self-knowledge and environment so that he/she can be inspired into attaining full potentials. This finding corroborates with the findings of Awujo and Kennedy (2015), Awujo, Agbakwuru and Kennedy (2017) who investigated the effects of vocational guidance on students preferred choice of tertiary education in Okrika local Government area and Rivers state respectively. Results in both studies indicated that vocational guidance is a veritable tool in effecting students preferred choice of tertiary education.

The second and third findings indicates that a differential effect exist between male students in the experimental group and female students in the control group and female students in the experimental group and male students in the control group. The post-test mean scores of the male students in the experimental group improved over that of their female counterparts in the control group after treatment, same applied to the female students in the experimental and male students in the control group. These results are also expected and not surprising because the control group male and female students were not exposed to any treatment to warrant any improvement in their choice of tertiary education as with the case of their male and female counterparts in the experimental group who showed a lot of promise in their choice of tertiary education. Vocational guidance is effective in directing students towards educational and career choices. The outcome of this study is in line with the views of Meyers as cited in National Career Development Association Ethical standards (2003) which states that Vocational Guidance and Counselling is made of experimental activities and procedures that spans over time. He said the primary concern of Vocational Guidance and counselling is the help giving to an individual in making decisions and choices essential in planning a future and building a career, these decisions and choices are required to affect a pleasing vocational adjustment.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study the following conclusions were drawn;

- Vocational Guidance and counseling did not have any significant differential effect between male and female students in the experimental group.
- Vocational Guidance and Counselling produced a significant differential effect between male students in the experimental group and female students in the control group.
- Vocational Guidance and Counselling also produced differential effect between female students in the experimental group and male students in the control group.

## 6. Recommendations

Sequel to the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

- Male and Female secondary school students should be constantly exposed to vocational guidance and counseling, so that they will be exposed to diverse information that will enable them take more informed decision.
- Male and Female secondary school students with dysfunctional educational and career choices should be referred to school counselors for the acquisition of more knowledge and information that will expand their scope of reasoning for a stress free educational and career life.
- Male and Female secondary school students in Rivers State should have unhindered access to guidance counselors through the employment of counselors in all secondary schools in Rivers state so as to enable them benefit from the invaluable information that will help them make informed decisions in their career.

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