

Vocational Services as Predictor of Self-Reliance and Personality Development of Learners with Visual Impairment in Akwa Ibom State

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Abstract: This study investigated on vocational services as predictor of self-reliance and personality development of learners with visual impairment in Akwa Ibom State. Four null hypotheses were postulated to guide the study. Correlational research design was employed for this study. The population of this study consisted of all 98 learners with visual impairment in all the Special Education Centres in Akwa Ibom State which undergo inclusive education practice. A sample of 98 visually impaired learners selected purposive sampling technique was used for the study schools. Vocational Services, Self-reliance and Personality Development Questionnaire` (VSSPDQ) were used as the instruments for the study. The instrument validity and reliability was determined. Cronbach's Alpha statistics was used to determined reliability coefficient which yielded reliability indices of 0.76, 0.71, 0.68 and 0.74 respectively. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used to test null hypotheses at 0.05 level of probability. The findings revealed a strong positive and significant relationship between vocational service and self-reliance of learners with visual impairment in Akwa Ibom State. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that government should ensure that schools are provided with qualified counsellors, more especially as the findings indicate area of gap in guidance and counselling need of the respondents. This will enable the learners with visual impairment to be equipped with issues relating to life and adjustment.

Keywords: Vocational Services, Predictor of Self-Reliance, Personality Development and Learners with Visual Impairment.

INTRODUCTION

Education of persons with disabilities has over the years received the attention of Nigeria governments. The need for qualitative education for this set of people informed the setting up of special schools and vocational centres all over the nation. Special schools in Nigeria cater for children and adults with one form of disability or the other such as the visually impaired, hearing impaired and intellectually disabled. Many of these people are enrolled for vocational education programme so that they can be independent on their own economically and be certified on a particular skill. Most persons with visual impairment who benefit from formal education are merely equipped with literacy skills which make them unable to function in careers that suits their interest and capabilities. There is no doubt that persons with visual impairment are disadvantaged in one way or the other when compared with sighted persons; anyway these disadvantages can be cater for if persons with visual impairment are given the right type of education (Chukuka, 2006).

In addition, McQuerrey (2012) emphasized that vocational education is an education or training which is useful and beneficial to individual or learners in securing job placement after training. Given the consideration that persons with visual impairment are faced with various forms of limitation and challenges, it is important that their training or education should be such that will help them overcome their disabilities when they secure employment. For instance, persons with visual impairment should be trained in vocational skills that will enable them to make use of their fingers to develop good finger anxiety such as Beads making, Basket Making, Mat Weaving and Soap Making and so on.

Persons with disabilities in general, and persons with visual impairment in particular like their counterparts are expected to be independent to a certain extent as much as possible. Independence refers to being able to sustain oneself without depending on others. The society has more respect for a person who is economically reliable and dependable than for a person who is dependent for livelihood on others. Obani (2003)

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stated that employment is a major element in the lifestyle of all people with or without visual deformity. They all stressed further that meaningful employment has both social, as well as economic implications and benefits. They all supported that, employment offers financial rewards, independence as well as family and community acceptance.

The drive for meeting the basic needs of man could be achieved through being self employed. In Nigeria, the problem of employment is not particular to only the average graduate, but also, it affects graduates with visual impairment across Nigeria. Every individual irrespective of the type of disability will want to engage in one type of job or the other, in order to be able to meet the basic needs of human life. An individual get employed because of the reward he or she expects to get from it. According to Ronald and Colin (2005), employability or being employed is an eminent sign of an individual's wholeness, completeness, social acceptance and relevance, financial and economic independence and of being a full contributory member of one's community. Employment of person could come in several ways or it could occur in any of these settings, which includes civil public, private sector, and enterprises.

Reddy, Ramar and Kusuma (2000) believed that visually impaired children have greater chances of being affected by nervous strain, insecurity and frustration due to their impairment. When Punani and Rawal (2000) referred to "Training in O & M" (p. 87), it is obvious that training will offer visually impaired children the chance to face real life situations and provide them with a sense of security and confidence. This will improve their ability to adapt to various situations and aid their personality development in the long run.

Vocational services played a great role by assisting unemployed graduates with visual impairment to develop some skills that are necessary for the survival of entrepreneurship development. Professional, who are knowledgeable enough, who worked in vocational centres for persons with visual impairment contribute immensely in facilitating different kinds of vocational training that could allow for entrepreneurial skills for self-reliance. Today, it is a common saying and common practice to recognize how crucial it is to consider different vocational training services as partners in progress in the alleviation of poverty and unemployment among the youths. Vocational services will determine entrepreneurial skills for self-reliance of unemployed graduate with visual impairment. This is true because, vocational services is the only means with which graduates with visual impairment who have not secure gainful employment can be self-reliant through appropriate entrepreneurial skills within their capacity. Adequate support though the effort of vocational education services and vocational social services will

assist them to be gainfully skilled in their endeavour and free from the problem of unemployment that graduates from universities are facing. Vocational services such Vocational Guidance and Counselling services and Vocational Rehabilitation Service is the focus of this study.

Counselling an integral part of the new policy aimed at providing special services which will assist students attain self-understanding to harness their latent potentials for proper educational, personal-social, and vocational development and adjustment. According to Egbochukwu (2008), the aims of school guidance and counselling services include the provision of the following to the students:

- i. Opportunities to develop knowledge and appreciation of themselves and others;
- ii. Opportunities to develop relationship skills, ethical standards, and a sense of responsibility;
- iii. Opportunities to acquire skills and attitudes necessary to develop educational goals which are suited to their needs of intents and abilities;
- iv. Information that would enable them to make decisions about life and career opportunities.

In the light of these opportunities, guidance and counseling programme aims at ensuring that no students are submerged in the field of human enterprise and endeavour. However, in the recent years, school leavers at all levels of educational institutions in Nigeria have been faced with severe joblessness. At government establishments and private enterprises, only few vacancies exist for school leavers who are specially connected with people who have overriding influence on government policy-makers and executors, as well as private entrepreneurs. According to Akolisa (2009), more than 90% of the school leavers are dependent on parents and relations for their daily bread contrary to the aim and purpose of sending them to school. While only very few of these school leavers are self-employed. Entrepreneurship development as a process of enhancing entrepreneurial skills and knowledge through structure/training and institution building programmes can be realized by students through active guidance and counseling programme. This will equip more students for self-employment which is a worthwhile objective for sustainable livelihood in developing national economy as Nigeria. More importantly, a well-articulated entrepreneurship development should offer more than self-employment and focus on helping people start and grow dynamic business that provides high value added which will contribute more to national development.

Vocational training is training for a specific career or trade, excluding the professions. Vocational training focuses on practical applications of skills learned, and is generally unconcerned with theory or traditional academic skills. A large part of the education in vocational schools is hands-on training. Vocational

training thus provides a link between education and the working world. It is usually provided either at the high school level or in a postsecondary trade school. Vocational training offers training for specific jobs. Since vocational training often begins in high school, students can graduate prepared to take a high-paying, skilled job immediately. Graduates of trade or vocational schools have an advantage over informally trained job-seekers because an independent organization certifies that they have the skills needed to successfully perform a specific, skilled occupation (Awogbenle and Iwuamadi, 2010).

Placement is simply helping clients to achieve entry to a particular job or course. To facilitate and sustained the self-reliance, especially for the students, there is the need for vocational services alongside, knowing fully that some of these students never had the advantage of any vocational services. Also vocational services will provide an opportunity for them to appreciate the value, functional and opportunities of the course they offers to them.

Statement of the Problem

Vocational services are very much essential in determining self-reliance and personality development among learners with visual impairment that are not employed. Every profession in life has its area of wealth creation but most learners with visual impairment are not adequately informed about the areas of wealth creation in any given profession due to the fact that, some of the vocational instructors fail to adequately get them informed on time as soon as they finish their training from any vocational center. In addition, full career opportunities in their chosen professions, if provided at all, are not always provided in details.

It has been observed that most learners with visual impairment fail to receive training that will best suit and build up their potentials. Also, unemployed person with visual impairment are faced with enormous barriers to employment opportunities due to discrimination and exclusion from quality education and inability to access the environment. Their potentials to function adequately in a working environment are thus greatly undetermined. Consequently some graduates resort to street begging or remain and dependent at home or on others and as a result of this they fail to be self-reliant because of their inability to secure desired employment thereby preventing them from contributing meaningfully their own quota as full members of the society at large. This can be traced to the economic situation in the country and also to the negative attitudes of many employers who have wrong perception of learners with visual impairment as incompetent and unable to fit in to work settings.

It has also been observed that a lot of persons with visual impairment fail to attain self-reliance and independence due to lack of required skills and

initiatives as a result of the negative societal attitude towards them. Usually, their potentials to acquire necessary skills for independent living are greatly undetermined living them in a state of homelessness and dependence. They are therefore at the mercy of others to survive. Many graduates with visual impairment receive the much desired formal education and vocational training but also fail to secure employment in order to earn a living. Two main factors can be blamed for this. First: the negative attitude of some employers who see graduates with visual impairment as unproductive and incapable of functioning in a job setting. Secondly: the current curriculum of the school system does not provide persons with visual impairment with the training that can motivate them to be self-employed after graduation. The training they received often limits them to mere job seekers rather than job creators. Poverty and lack of financial skills have made learners with visual impairment remain unemployable thus, many have joined the bandwagon of menial job workers, but because of poverty, lack of productive skills, high level of illiteracy and ignorance on the graduates themselves has driven many graduates with visual impairment from the rehabilitation centers. The inability of persons with visual impairment to obtain the practice working skills coupled with obsolete equipment supplied to the training centers have made them to drop out from the training or learning programmes that take longer period to complete. Lack of proper funding in the centres have not made it possible for them to purchase workshop tools and equipment for youth and this have had multiple effect in the life of persons with visual impairment after graduation. Hence, this study sought to find out the vocational services as predictor of self-reliance and personality development of learners with visual impairment in AkwaIbom State, Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES

Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. Determine the relationship between vocational guidance and counseling programme and self-reliance of learners with visual impairment in Akwa Ibom State.
- ii. Determine the relationship between vocational guidance and counseling programme and personality development of learners with visual impairment in Akwa Ibom State.
- iii. Ascertain the relationship between vocational rehabilitation and self-reliance of learners with visual impairment in Akwa Ibom State.
- iv. Determine the relationship between vocational rehabilitation and personality development of learners with visual impairment in Akwa Ibom State.

Null Hypotheses

- i. There is no significant relationship between vocational guidance and counseling

- programme and self-reliance of learners with visual impairment in AkwaIbom State.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between vocational guidance and counseling programme and personality development of learners with visual impairment in AkwaIbom State.
 - iii. There is no significant relationship between vocational rehabilitation and self-reliance of learners with visual impairment in AkwaIbom State.
 - iv. There is no significant relationship between vocational rehabilitation and personality development of learners with visual impairment in AkwaIbom State

Research Design

The correlational research design was adopted for the study. This design is considered suitable for the study because it involves investigating into the magnitude and direction (positive or negative) of relationship that exist between a dependent variable and one or more independent variable(s) (Kpolovie, 2010).

Area of the Study

The study was carried out in AkwaIbom State. AkwaIbom is a state in Nigeria. It is located in the Coastal Southern part of the country, lying between latitude 4^o32N and 5^o33N, and longitude 7^o25E and 8^o22E. The state is bordered on the East by Cross River State, on the West by Rivers State and Abia State, and on the South by the Atlantic Ocean and the southernmost top of Cross River State and is currently the highest oil-and gas producing state in the country. The state capital is Uyo, with over 500,000 inhabitants. AkwaIbom has an airport (AkwaIbom International Airport) and standard stadium over 30,000 capacities and two major seaports on Atlantic Ocean with a proposed construction of a world-class seaport in Ibaka at Oron. The state has a predominantly civil service working populace, whilst other outside the public service sphere are mainly into informal sector business, farming, fishing and local crafts. Along with English, the main spoken languages are Ibibio, Annang, Eket and Oron language.

Akwa-Ibom also occupies an outstanding position in provision of educational service in AkwaIbom State. At the tertiary level, three campuses of the University of Uyo and some private University and Polytechnics, there are many secondary, primary and secondary school. The state has three special school two are located in the state capital, there are Government Special Education Center, Mbiabong and St. Vincent Special School, Uyo as well as St. Louise Special School IkotEkpene Local Government Area.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised all the 98 learners with visual impairment in all the Special

Education Centres in AkwaIbom State which undergo inclusive education practice. (AkwaIbom State Ministry of Education, 2021).

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of 98 visually impaired learners drawn from all the special schools selected through purposive sampling technique was used for the study.

Instrumentation

For the purpose of this study, a researcher-made instrument was used for data collection known as: Vocational Services, Self-reliance and Personality Development Questionnaire` (VSSPDQ). The instrument has four sections A and B. Section A will seek for personal information of the respondents, while section B will elicit responses on Vocational Services, Self-reliance and Personality Development. Vocational Services was based on Guidance and Counseling service, Vocational rehabilitation, 5 items each with a total of 20 items. The instrument was structured on 4-point rating scale categorized into Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD). Effort was made to ensure clarity and brevity in item construction. This removed all uncertainties that the respondents would have come across. Respondents were expected to indicate by ticking the extent to which they agreed or disagreed to statement on the instrument.

Validation of the Instrument

Face and content validity were established for Vocational Services, Self-reliance and Personality Development Questionnaire` (VSSPDQ) was given to assessment by three experts in the Department of Early Childhood and Special Education and Measurement and Evaluation, Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, who independently assessed the various items to ascertain their relevance to the research questions, hypotheses and language used in developing the items. The experts effected correction, checked the contents and appropriateness of items and make useful suggestions that were incorporated into the final version of the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

The internal consistency approach was adopted for this study. The reliability of Vocational Services, Self-reliance and Personality Development Questionnaire` (VSSPDQ).administered to 20 learner with visual impairment who were randomly selected from the study population but were not included in the study sample. However, the scores obtained from the validated instruments were used to compute the reliability coefficient using Cronbach's Alpha Statistics that yielded the reliability indices, 0.76, 0.71, 0.68 and 0.74 respectively. These high reliability coefficients confirmed that these variables were internally consistent.

Research Procedure/Administration of the Instrument

Prior to the commencement of the study, the researcher visited each of the sampled schools for the administration of the questionnaire. This was personally done by the researcher with the help of five research assistants who accompanied to the field. All questions were read to the respondents due to their impairment. The questionnaire were filled and returned on the spot.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used for testing the hypotheses by comparing it

with the critical-r-value. The entire hypotheses formulated were tested at .05 level of significance. In order to take decision as regards the hypotheses, whenever the calculated r-value was greater than the critical r-value, the null hypothesis was rejected and whenever the calculated r-value was less than the critical r-value, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between vocational guidance and counseling programme and self-reliance of learners with visual impairment in Akwa Ibom State.

Table-1: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the significant relationship Vocational Guidance and Counseling Programme and Self-Reliance of Learners with Visual Impairment

Variables	ΣX ΣY	ΣX^2 ΣY^2	ΣXY	r-cal.	r-crit.
Vocational Guidance and Counselling programme	1495	27392	69983	0.621	0.208
Self-Reliance	4107	188389			

The result presented in Table 1 revealed that the calculated r-value of 0.621 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.208 at .05 level of significance with 96 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis that says there is no significant relationship between vocational guidance and counseling programme and self-reliance of learners with visual impairment was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between vocational guidance

and counseling programme and self-reliance of learners with visual impairment.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between vocational guidance and counselling programme and personality development of learners with visual impairment in Akwa Ibom State.

Table-2: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the significant relationship Vocational Guidance and Counselling Programme and Personality Development of Learners with Visual Impairment

Variables	ΣX ΣY	ΣX^2 ΣY^2	ΣXY	r-cal.	r-crit.
Vocational Guidance and Counselling programme	1495	27392	69983	0.621	0.208
Personality Development	4107	188389			

The result presented in Table 2 revealed that the calculated r-value of 0.621 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.208 at .05 level of significance with 96 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis that says there is no significant relationship between vocational guidance and counseling programme and personality development of learners with visual impairment was rejected. This implies that

there is a significant relationship between vocational guidance and counseling programme and personality development of learners with visual impairment.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant relationship between vocational rehabilitation and self-reliance of learners with visual impairment in Akwa Ibom State.

Table-3: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the significant relationship vocational guidance and counseling programme and personality development of learners with visual impairment

Variables	ΣX ΣY	ΣX^2 ΣY^2	ΣXY	r-cal.	r-crit.
Vocational Rehabilitation	1495	27392	69983	0.621	0.208
Self-Reliance	4107	188389			

The result presented in Table 3 revealed that the calculated r-value of 0.621 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.208 at .05 level of significance with 96 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis that says there is no significant relationship between vocational rehabilitation and self-reliance of learners with visual impairment was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between

vocational rehabilitation and self-reliance of learners with visual impairment.

Hypothesis Four

There is no significant relationship between vocational rehabilitation and self-reliance of learners with visual impairment in Akwalbom State.

Table-4: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the significant relationship Vocational Rehabilitation and Personality Development of Learners with Visual Impairment

Variables	ΣX ΣY	ΣX^2 ΣY^2	ΣXY	r-cal.	r-crit.
Vocational Rehabilitation	1495	27392	69983	0.621	0.208
Self-Reliance	4107	188389			

The result presented in Table 4 revealed that the calculated r-value of 0.621 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.208 at 05 level of significance with 96 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis that says there is no significant relationship between vocational rehabilitation and self-reliance of learners with visual impairment was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between vocational rehabilitation and self-reliance of learners with visual impairment.

The following were the major findings of the study

- i. Strong positive and significant relationship between vocational guidance and counseling programme and self-reliance of learners with visual impairment in Akwalbom State.
- ii. Moderate positive and significant relationship between vocational guidance and counseling programme and personality development of learners with visual impairment in Akwalbom State.
- iii. Moderate positive and significant relationship between vocational rehabilitation and self-reliance of learners with visual impairment in Akwalbom State.
- iv. Strong positive and significant relationship between vocational rehabilitation and personality development of learners with visual impairment in Akwalbom State.

CONCLUSION

The study has indeed revealed a significant relationship between vocational services between self-reliance and personality development of learners with visual impairment in Akwalbom State. These are rooted in the vocational guidance and counselling programme and vocational rehabilitation. Based on the results, there may be a real potential to improve the experiences and increase the self-reliance and personality development among learners with visual impairments if schools provide appropriate accommodations with more

vocational services and if all visually impaired people received better mobility training. It is equally important to note that when learners with visual impairment are helped to participate actively in a variety of social and cultural activities to make recognizable contributions to the maintenance of societal functioning, they have gratification with life.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings of this study, the researcher therefore makes the following recommendations:

- i. Government should ensure that schools are provided with qualified counsellors, more especially as the findings indicate area of gap in guidance and counseling need of the respondents. This will enable the learners with visual impairment to be equipped with issues relating to life and adjustment.
- ii. It is clear from the findings of this study that vocational rehabilitation play a significant role in the life of the learners with visual impairment, especially in the area of self-reliance and personality development. As a result therefore, the government should put in place functional vocational rehabilitation programme through its relevant agencies.
- iii. Sheltered workshops for rehabilitations should be well equipped so as to meet the needs of learners with visual impairment. When this is done, they can now be placed into appropriate or suitable jobs.

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