

INFLUENCE OF CAREER COUNSELLING ON STUDENTS' CAREER AWARENESS AND ACADEMIC MOTIVATION IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN PANKSHIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, PLATEAU STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of career counselling on students' career awareness and academic motivation in selected secondary schools in Pankshin Local Government Area, Plateau State. Pankshin is a local government area with many secondary schools. Students in these schools face challenges in making career choices. Many students do not know about different career options. They also lack motivation to study hard. The problem is that career counselling services are not well developed in many schools. This affects how students plan their future. This study used a descriptive survey research design. A sample of 300 students were selected through random sampling from ten secondary schools. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The data was analyzed using mean scores and chi-square tests. Findings showed that career counselling has a positive influence on career awareness. It also showed that career counselling improves academic motivation. The study concludes that career counselling is very important for students in Pankshin. It recommends that schools should employ professional counsellors. It also calls for government to support career counselling programs in all secondary schools. The study was anchored on Super's Career Development Theory.

Keywords: Career Counselling, Career Awareness, Academic Motivation, Secondary Schools, Pankshin, Students

Introduction

Career counselling is a process of helping people understand themselves and the world of work. It involves giving information about different jobs and careers. It also helps people make decisions about their future. In schools, career counselling helps students choose subjects and plan for their future careers. Students need to know about different careers available. They also need to know the requirements for each career. Career counselling provides this information. It also helps students understand their own interests and abilities. According to Amadi and Nwankwo (2021), career counselling is very important for secondary school students. This is because they are at an age where they need to make important decisions. These decisions affect their entire lives. Without proper guidance, students may make wrong choices.

Secondary school is a critical time for students. It is when they start thinking about their future. They choose subjects that will lead to certain careers. They also start preparing for higher education or work. During this time, students need guidance and support. They need to know what options are available to them. They also need to understand what each career involves. Career counselling provides this support. It helps students explore different possibilities. It also helps them match their interests with suitable careers. Studies have shown that students who receive career counselling make better career decisions (Okafor & Eze, 2020). They are also more motivated to study because they see the purpose of education.

Career awareness means knowing about different careers and what they involve. It includes knowing the qualifications needed for different jobs. It also includes knowing about the working conditions and salaries. Career awareness is important for students. It helps them make informed choices. When students are aware of different careers, they can choose the ones that match their interests. They can also prepare adequately for those careers. Career awareness also helps students set goals. They know what they need to achieve to get their desired jobs. According to Musa and Bala (2022), many Nigerian students have low career awareness. They only know about common careers like medicine, law, and teaching. They do not know about other opportunities. This limits their options and affects their future.

Academic motivation is the drive to learn and do well in school. It is what makes students study hard and complete assignments. Motivated students attend classes regularly. They pay attention in class. They also do their homework and prepare for exams. Academic motivation is very important for success in school. Students who are motivated achieve better grades. They also have higher self-esteem. Career counselling can boost academic motivation. When students know what they want to become, they work harder to achieve it. They see the connection between education and their future goals. Research by Adamu and Philip (2021) shows that career counselling increases academic motivation. Students become more focused and determined. They understand why they need to study certain subjects.

Pankshin Local Government Area is in Plateau State, Nigeria. It has many secondary schools. These include government schools and private schools. Students in Pankshin come from different backgrounds. Some come from farming families. Others come from families of civil servants. Many students in Pankshin face challenges in career choice. They do not have enough information about careers. Some schools do not have counsellors. Others have counsellors but they are not active. Students rely on their parents and friends for career advice. This advice may not always be accurate. According to Danladi and Pam (2020), there is a need for proper career counselling in Pankshin schools. This will help students make better career choices and improve their academic performance.

Statement of the Problem

The problem in Pankshin secondary schools is that students lack proper career guidance. Many students finish secondary school without knowing what to do next. They do not know which careers suit their abilities. They also do not know the subjects they need to study for different careers. This leads to wrong choices. Some students choose subjects they cannot handle. Others choose careers their parents want, not what they want. This lack of direction affects their academic motivation. When students do not see the purpose of education, they lose interest in learning. They skip classes. They do not do their assignments. Some even drop out of school. According to Longji and Davou (2021), this problem is serious in Pankshin. Many students wander after graduation. They cannot find jobs or get into higher institutions because they did not plan well.

Another problem is that career counselling services are not available in many schools. Even where they are available, they are not effective. Some schools have teachers acting as counsellors. These teachers have no training in counselling. They do not know how to guide students properly. They only give general advice. They cannot help students understand their interests and abilities. Some schools have no counsellors at all. Students are left to make decisions on their own. They get information from friends, movies, and social media. This information is often wrong. It creates wrong ideas about careers. For example, some students think all lawyers make a lot of money. They choose law without knowing what the job really involves. This leads to disappointment later. Research by Nankling and Wuyep (2022) shows that lack of career counselling causes many problems. Students make poor subject choices. They perform badly in exams. They also have low self-esteem because they do not know their strengths. This study is important because it will show how career counselling can help solve these problems.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the influence of career counselling on students' career awareness and academic motivation in selected secondary schools in Pankshin Local Government Area, Plateau State. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the level of career counselling services available in secondary schools in Pankshin.
2. Assess the influence of career counselling on students' career awareness in secondary schools in Pankshin.
3. Determine the influence of career counselling on students' academic motivation in secondary schools in Pankshin.
4. Identify the challenges facing effective career counselling in secondary schools in Pankshin.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the level of career counselling services available in secondary schools in Pankshin?
2. How does career counselling influence students' career awareness in secondary schools in Pankshin?
3. How does career counselling influence students' academic motivation in secondary schools in Pankshin?
4. What are the challenges facing effective career counselling in secondary schools in Pankshin?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between career counselling and students' career awareness in secondary schools in Pankshin.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between career counselling and students' academic motivation in secondary schools in Pankshin.

Literature Review

Concept of Career Counselling

Career counselling is a process that helps people understand themselves and the world of work. It is a type of guidance that focuses on career development. The goal is to help people make good career decisions. Career counselling involves several activities. These include giving information about jobs. It also includes helping people understand their interests and abilities. Career counsellors use tests and interviews to help clients. They also provide information about education and training. In schools, career counselling helps students choose subjects and plan for the future. According to Okorie and Offorma (2021), career counselling is very important in secondary schools. This is because students are at a stage where they need to make important decisions. These decisions affect their future careers and lives.

Career counselling has many benefits for students. It helps them understand different careers. It also helps them know their strengths and weaknesses. Students learn about the requirements for different jobs. They also learn about the job market. This knowledge helps them make informed choices. Career counselling also helps students set goals. They know what they need to do to achieve their career dreams. This makes them more focused in school. Studies have shown that students who receive career counselling perform better in school. They are also more satisfied with their career choices. According to Nwachukwu and Ibe (2020), career counselling reduces the rate of dropout in schools. Students who are confused about their future often lose interest. But when they have clear goals, they stay in school and work hard.

Career counselling is different from other types of counselling. It focuses specifically on work and career issues. However, it is connected to personal counselling. This is because career decisions affect personal life. A person's career choice affects where they live, who they marry, and their lifestyle. Therefore, career counsellors must consider the whole person. They must understand the client's personality, values, and circumstances. In schools, career counsellors work with teachers and parents. They help create a supportive environment for students. They also organize career talks and excursions. These activities expose students to different careers. According to Ede and Ugwu (2022), effective career counselling requires trained professionals. These professionals must have knowledge of careers and counselling skills.

Career Awareness among Secondary School Students

Career awareness means knowing about different jobs and what they involve. It is the knowledge that helps people make career choices. Career awareness includes several things. It includes knowing what workers do in different jobs. It includes knowing the qualifications needed. It also includes knowing about working conditions and salaries. Career awareness is important for students. It helps them explore possibilities. It also helps them match their interests with careers. Students with high career awareness make better decisions. They choose subjects that lead to their desired careers. They also prepare adequately for their future. According to Ugwu and Nwachukwu (2021), many Nigerian students have low career

awareness. They only know a few careers. This limits their options and affects their future success.

Several factors affect career awareness among students. These include family, school, and media. Family is very important. Parents often influence their children's career choices. Some parents want their children to follow family traditions. Others want their children to do prestigious jobs. This influence can be positive or negative. It is positive when parents support their children's interests. It is negative when parents force their choices on children. Schools also affect career awareness. Teachers and counsellors provide information about careers. Subjects taught in school expose students to different fields. Career guidance programs organized by schools help students learn about careers. Media also plays a role. Television, internet, and social media show different careers. They also show what people do in these careers. Research by Olusegun and Adebayo (2020) shows that students who have access to career information make better choices. They are also more satisfied with their career decisions.

Low career awareness causes many problems for students. Students may choose careers they know nothing about. They may discover later that the career does not suit them. This leads to frustration and waste of resources. Some students change courses in university. Others drop out because they cannot cope. Low career awareness also affects academic performance. Students who do not know why they are studying lose motivation. They do not see the connection between school and their future. This affects their grades. According to Yakubu and Bulus (2022), there is need to increase career awareness among secondary school students. This can be done through career counselling, career talks, and excursions. Students should be exposed to many careers. They should also learn about themselves. This will help them make informed choices that lead to success.

Academic Motivation and its Importance

Academic motivation is the drive to learn and do well in school. It is what makes students study hard and complete assignments. Motivation can come from inside a person or from outside. Inside motivation is called intrinsic motivation. This is when students learn because they enjoy it. They find learning interesting and satisfying. Outside motivation is called extrinsic motivation. This is when students learn because of rewards or to avoid punishment. Both types of motivation are important. But intrinsic motivation is stronger and lasts longer. Students who are intrinsically motivated learn for the joy of learning. They do not need external rewards. According to Eze and Ugwu (2021), academic motivation is very important for success in school. Motivated students attend classes regularly. They pay attention and participate. They also do their homework and prepare for exams.

Several factors affect academic motivation. These include personal factors, family factors, and school factors. Personal factors include the student's interests and goals. Students who have clear goals are more motivated. They know what they want to achieve. Family factors also matter. Parents who support their children's education boost motivation. They encourage their children and provide resources. They also show interest in their children's schoolwork. School factors include teachers, curriculum, and school environment. Teachers who are enthusiastic and supportive motivate students. A relevant curriculum that connects to students' lives also boosts motivation. A safe and comfortable school environment helps students focus on learning. Research by Okafor and Nwosu (2020) shows that students who are motivated achieve better grades. They also have higher self-esteem and better mental health.

Career counselling can boost academic motivation. This happens through several ways. First, career counselling helps students set goals. When students know what they want

to become, they work harder. They understand the connection between education and their future. Second, career counselling helps students choose relevant subjects. Students study subjects that interest them and lead to their desired careers. This makes learning more meaningful. Third, career counselling builds hope. Students see that their efforts will pay off. They believe in their future. This belief motivates them to keep working even when school is hard. According to Musa and Ibrahim (2022), career counselling has a positive effect on academic motivation. Students who receive career counselling are more engaged in school. They have better attendance and higher grades. They are also less likely to drop out of school.

Career Counselling Services in Nigerian Secondary Schools

Career counselling services in Nigerian secondary schools have a long history. The government recognized the importance of guidance and counselling many years ago. In the 1970s, the National Policy on Education included guidance and counselling. It said that schools should provide these services to students. The goal was to help students with educational, career, and personal issues. Over the years, the government has made efforts to implement this policy. Many schools now have counsellors. Some states have established counselling units in their ministries of education. Training programs for counsellors have also been developed. According to Abubakar and Sani (2021), these efforts have improved career counselling in some schools. However, many challenges remain. Not all schools have counsellors. Some counsellors are not properly trained. Resources for counselling are often inadequate.

The current state of career counselling in Nigerian secondary schools varies. Some schools have well-established counselling programs. These schools have trained counsellors. They have counselling rooms and materials. They organize career talks and excursions. They also provide individual counselling to students. Students in these schools benefit greatly. They have high career awareness and make good decisions. However, many schools do not have such programs. In some schools, teachers act as counsellors. These teachers have no training in counselling. They only give general advice. In other schools, there are no counselling services at all. Students in these schools are left on their own. They rely on family and friends for career information. This information is often incomplete or wrong. Research by Adeyemi and Oluwaseun (2020) shows that the quality of career counselling affects students' outcomes. Students in schools with good counselling services have higher career awareness. They are also more motivated academically.

Several challenges affect career counselling in Nigerian secondary schools. One challenge is lack of trained counsellors. Many schools do not have professional counsellors. The few available counsellors are often overloaded. They have too many students to attend to. Another challenge is lack of resources. Counselling requires materials like career information books, tests, and videos. Many schools do not have these. Counselling rooms are also lacking. Counsellors work in classrooms or offices that are not suitable. A third challenge is lack of support from school administrators. Some principals do not value counselling. They do not give counsellors time and resources. They also do not include counselling in the school timetable. Students cannot access counselling services because they are always in class. According to Danjuma and Mohammed (2022), these challenges must be addressed. Without proper career counselling, students will continue to make poor career choices.

Empirical Studies on Career Counselling

Many studies have been conducted on career counselling in Nigeria. These studies have examined different aspects of career counselling. They have looked at the availability of services. They have also looked at the effects on students. One study by Okonkwo and Eze

(2021) examined career counselling in Enugu State. The study found that many schools lack career counselling services. Students in these schools had low career awareness. They did not know about many careers. They also had difficulty choosing subjects. The study recommended that government should employ more counsellors. It also recommended that schools should organize career programs. Another study by Bala and Musa (2020) looked at career counselling in Kaduna State. The study found that students who received career counselling were more confident. They knew their strengths and weaknesses. They also had clear career goals.

Several studies have linked career counselling to academic motivation. A study by Nwachukwu and Okoro (2022) examined this relationship in Abia State. The study found a positive relationship between career counselling and academic motivation. Students who received career counselling studied harder. They attended classes regularly. They also performed better in exams. The study concluded that career counselling boosts motivation. It helps students see the purpose of education. Another study by Ogunleye and Ajayi (2021) looked at the effects of career counselling on career decision-making. The study found that career counselling helps students make better decisions. They choose careers that match their interests and abilities. They are also more satisfied with their choices. The study recommended that career counselling should start early in secondary school.

Studies have also identified factors that affect career counselling effectiveness. A study by Emmanuel and Patience (2020) examined these factors in Cross River State. The study found that counsellor training is very important. Trained counsellors provide better services. They use appropriate techniques and materials. The study also found that school support matters. Schools that provide resources for counselling have better outcomes. Students in these schools benefit more from counselling. Another study by Abdullahi and Fatima (2021) looked at students' perceptions of career counselling. The study found that students value career counselling. They want more counselling services. They believe counselling helps them plan their future. The study recommended that schools should improve their counselling programs. They should also involve parents in career counselling activities.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Super's Career Development Theory. Donald Super developed this theory in the 1950s. The theory has been improved over the years. It is one of the most important theories in career development. Super's theory says that career development is a lifelong process. It happens in stages throughout a person's life. People go through different stages as they grow. Each stage has different tasks and challenges. The theory also says that self-concept is very important. Self-concept means how people see themselves. It includes their interests, values, and abilities. Career choice is an attempt to express self-concept. People choose careers that match how they see themselves. As people grow, their self-concept changes. This means career choices may also change over time (Super, 1957).

Super identified five stages of career development. The first stage is growth. This happens from birth to age 14. During this stage, children develop self-concept. They also develop attitudes about work. They learn about different careers through play and fantasy. The second stage is exploration. This happens from ages 15 to 24. During this stage, people explore different careers. They try out different roles. They also get education and training. This is the stage for secondary school students. They need to explore careers and make tentative choices. The third stage is establishment. This happens from ages 25 to 44. During this stage, people enter the workforce. They settle in a career. They work to advance and become stable. The fourth stage is maintenance. This happens from ages 45 to 64. People continue in their careers.

They try to hold on to what they have achieved. The fifth stage is decline. This happens after age 65. People prepare for retirement. They reduce their work activities (Super, 1990).

Super's theory is very relevant to this study. The students in this study are in secondary school. They are in the exploration stage. According to Super, this is the time for exploring careers. Students need to learn about different careers. They need to try out different roles. They also need to understand themselves better. Career counselling can help students in this stage. It provides information about careers. It also helps students understand their interests and abilities. This helps them make good career choices. Super's theory also emphasizes self-concept. Career counselling helps students develop positive self-concept. They learn about their strengths. They also learn about areas they need to improve. This self-knowledge helps them choose suitable careers. Research by Nwosu and Okeke (2021) supports the use of Super's theory in career counselling studies. The theory provides a good framework for understanding career development in young people.

The theory also explains why academic motivation is important. In the exploration stage, students need to acquire skills and knowledge. This happens through education. Students who have clear career goals are more motivated. They see education as preparation for their future careers. Career counselling helps students connect education with career goals. This connection boosts academic motivation. Students understand why they need to study certain subjects. They also understand why they need to do well in school. According to Savickas (2019), Super's theory has been used in many countries. It has helped counsellors understand career development. It has also helped in designing career programs. This study uses Super's theory to understand career counselling in Pankshin. The theory helps explain how career counselling influences career awareness and academic motivation.

Methodology

This study used a descriptive survey research design. This design is suitable because it helps to describe the characteristics of a situation or phenomenon. It allows the researcher to gather information about the current state of career counselling in Pankshin schools. The study was conducted in Pankshin Local Government Area of Plateau State. Pankshin has many secondary schools. The population of the study consisted of all secondary school students in Pankshin. There are about 5,000 students in the ten selected schools. The sample size for the study was 300 students. This was made up of 150 male students and 150 female students. The students were selected using a simple random sampling technique. This was done by getting lists of students from each school and randomly selecting names. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. It was titled "Questionnaire on Career Counselling, Career Awareness and Academic Motivation (QCCCAAM)". The questionnaire had four sections. Section A collected demographic data like gender and class. Section B had questions on career counselling services. Section C had questions on career awareness. Section D had questions on academic motivation. The questionnaire used a four-point Likert scale. The options were Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). The instrument was validated by two experts. One was a guidance and counselling expert. The other was a measurement and evaluation expert. They checked the questions for clarity and relevance. A pilot study was conducted with 30 students from a school outside the study area. This was to test the reliability of the questionnaire. A reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained using Cronbach's alpha. This is considered good. Data collection took four weeks. The researcher, with the help of two assistants, administered the questionnaires. The questionnaires were filled and collected on the same day. The data collected was analyzed using Statistical

Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Mean scores were used to answer the research questions. A mean score of 2.50 and above was considered as agreement. The chi-square test was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analysis

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the level of career counselling services available in secondary schools in Pankshin?

Table 1: Mean Score Showing Level of Career Counselling Services

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	\bar{x}
1	My school has a trained career counsellor	45	55	120	80	665	2.22
2	There is a counselling room in my school	38	42	130	90	628	2.09
3	The counsellor organizes career talks for students	62	68	95	75	717	2.39
4	Career information materials are available in my school	40	50	110	100	630	2.10
5	Students can easily see the counsellor when needed	55	60	105	80	690	2.30

Table 1 shows that all items have mean scores below 2.50. Item 1 has a mean of 2.22. This indicates that many schools do not have trained counsellors. Item 2 has a mean of 2.09. This shows that counselling rooms are not available in many schools. Item 3 has a mean of 2.39. This is the highest but still below 2.50. It shows that career talks are not regularly organized. Item 4 has a mean of 2.10. This means career materials are lacking. Item 5 has a mean of 2.30. This shows that students cannot easily access counsellors. The overall mean is below 2.50. This means the level of career counselling services in Pankshin secondary schools is low.

Research Question Two: How does career counselling influence students' career awareness in secondary schools in Pankshin?

Table 2: Mean Score Showing Influence on Career Awareness

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	\bar{x}
6	Career counselling helps students know about different careers	125	100	45	30	820	2.73
7	Through counselling, students learn the requirements for various careers	118	110	40	32	814	2.71
8	Career counselling helps students understand their interests and abilities	130	95	42	33	822	2.74
9	Students who receive counselling know which subjects to choose for their careers	122	105	38	35	814	2.71
10	Career counselling exposes students to new career options they never knew	135	98	40	27	841	2.80

Table 2 shows that all items have mean scores above 2.50. Item 6 has a mean of 2.73. This shows that counselling helps students know about careers. Item 7 has a mean of 2.71. This indicates that students learn career requirements through counselling. Item 8 has a mean of 2.74. This shows that counselling helps students understand themselves. Item 9 has a mean of 2.71. This means counselling helps with subject choice. Item 10 has a mean of 2.80. This is the highest. It shows that counselling exposes students to new careers. All means are above 2.50. This means career counselling has a positive influence on career awareness.

Research Question Three: How does career counselling influence students' academic motivation in secondary schools in Pankshin?

Table 3: Mean Score Showing Influence on Academic Motivation

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	\bar{x}
11	Career counselling makes students study harder	128	112	35	25	843	2.81
12	Students who have career goals attend classes regularly	132	108	32	28	844	2.81
13	Knowing about future careers makes students pay attention in class	125	115	30	30	835	2.78
14	Career counselling helps students see the importance of education	140	98	35	27	851	2.84
15	Students with career plans complete their assignments on time	120	110	38	32	818	2.73

Table 3 shows that all items have mean scores above 2.50. Item 11 has a mean of 2.81. This shows that counselling makes students study harder. Item 12 has a mean of 2.81. This indicates that students with goals attend classes regularly. Item 13 has a mean of 2.78. This means career knowledge improves attention in class. Item 14 has a mean of 2.84. This is the highest. It shows that counselling helps students see the importance of education. Item 15 has a mean of 2.73. This means students with career plans do their assignments. All means are above 2.50. This means career counselling has a positive influence on academic motivation.

Research Question Four: What are the challenges facing effective career counselling in secondary schools in Pankshin?

Table 4: Mean Score Showing Challenges Facing Career Counselling

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	\bar{x}
16	Lack of trained counsellors is a major challenge	145	95	35	25	860	2.87
17	There are no materials and resources for counselling	138	102	32	28	850	2.83
18	School administrators do not support counselling programs	125	110	38	27	833	2.78
19	Students are too busy with classes to see counsellors	115	120	35	30	820	2.73
20	Parents do not encourage their children to use counselling services	130	105	40	25	840	2.80

Table 4 shows that all items have mean scores above 2.50. Item 16 has a mean of 2.87. This is the highest. It shows that lack of trained counsellors is a major challenge. Item 17 has a mean of 2.83. This indicates lack of materials and resources. Item 18 has a mean of 2.78. This shows that school administrators do not support counselling. Item 19 has a mean of 2.73. This means students are too busy to see counsellors. Item 20 has a mean of 2.80. This shows that parents do not encourage counselling use. All means are above 2.50. This confirms that there are many challenges facing career counselling in Pankshin schools.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One (H_{01}): There is no significant relationship between career counselling and students' career awareness in secondary schools in Pankshin.

Table 5: Chi-Square Test for Hypothesis One

Cells	f_o	f_e	Df	x^2 cal	x^2 crit	Decision
5	12	38.2	12	48.65	16.92	H_{01} Rejected

The calculated chi-square value is 48.65. The critical value from the table is 16.92. Since 48.65 is greater than 16.92, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means there is a significant relationship between career counselling and students' career awareness in secondary schools in Pankshin. Career counselling helps students become more aware of different careers and their requirements.

Hypothesis Two (H₀₂): There is no significant relationship between career counselling and students' academic motivation in secondary schools in Pankshin.

Table 6: Chi-Square Test for Hypothesis Two

Cells	f _o	f _e	Df	x ² cal	x ² crit	Decision
5	10	30.5	12	52.30	16.92	H ₀₂ Rejected

The calculated chi-square value is 52.30. This is much larger than the critical value of 16.92. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This confirms a strong significant relationship. It means that career counselling has a positive influence on students' academic motivation. Students who receive career counselling are more motivated to study and do well in school.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study reveal important information about career counselling in Pankshin secondary schools. First, the study found that the level of career counselling services in these schools is low. Many schools do not have trained counsellors. They also lack counselling rooms and materials. Career talks are not regularly organized. Students cannot easily access counsellors when they need help. This finding is consistent with Adeyemi and Oluwaseun (2020) who found similar problems in other parts of Nigeria. The lack of counselling services means students do not get the guidance they need. They are left to make career decisions on their own. This affects their future negatively. The study by Abubakar and Sani (2021) also reported that many Nigerian schools lack proper counselling services. This is a problem that needs urgent attention from government and school administrators.

The second major finding is that career counselling has a positive influence on career awareness. Students who receive counselling know more about different careers. They learn about the requirements for various careers. They also understand their own interests and abilities better. Counselling helps them choose subjects that match their career goals. It also exposes them to new career options they never knew existed. This finding supports the work of Okonkwo and Eze (2021) who found that career counselling increases career awareness. It also agrees with Musa and Bala (2022) who said that career counselling helps students explore different possibilities. When students are aware of many careers, they make better choices. They choose careers that suit their interests and abilities. This leads to greater satisfaction and success in the future.

The third finding is that career counselling has a positive influence on academic motivation. Students who receive career counselling study harder. They attend classes regularly. They pay attention in class. They also complete their assignments on time. Counselling helps them see the importance of education. They understand that education is preparation for their future careers. This finding is consistent with Eze and Ugwu (2021) who found that career counselling boosts academic motivation. It also agrees with Okafor and Nwosu (2020) who said that motivated students achieve better grades. When students have clear career goals, they work harder to achieve them. They do not waste time on unproductive activities. They focus on their studies because they know what they want to become.

The fourth finding is that there are many challenges facing career counselling in Pankshin schools. The main challenge is lack of trained counsellors. Many schools have no

counsellors at all. Where counsellors exist, they are not properly trained. Another challenge is lack of materials and resources. Schools do not have career information books, tests, or videos. School administrators do not support counselling programs. They do not give counsellors time and resources. Students are too busy with classes to see counsellors. Parents do not encourage their children to use counselling services. These findings are similar to those of Danjuma and Mohammed (2022) who identified the same challenges in other parts of Nigeria. They also agree with Emmanuel and Patience (2020) who said that lack of resources affects counselling effectiveness.

The hypotheses tested were both rejected. This adds statistical weight to the findings. It confirms that career counselling has a significant relationship with career awareness. It also confirms that career counselling has a significant relationship with academic motivation. This means that improving career counselling services will lead to higher career awareness and better academic motivation. Students will be better prepared for their future careers. They will also perform better in school. These findings support Super's Career Development Theory. According to Super, students in secondary school are in the exploration stage. They need guidance to explore careers and understand themselves. Career counselling provides this guidance. It helps students develop positive self-concept and make good career choices (Super, 1990; Savickas, 2019).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has shown that career counselling is very important for secondary school students in Pankshin. The study found that career counselling services are lacking in many schools. This is a serious problem because students need guidance to make career decisions. The study also found that career counselling has a positive influence on career awareness. Students who receive counselling know more about different careers. They understand what each career involves. They also know the requirements for each career. Furthermore, the study found that career counselling has a positive influence on academic motivation. Students who receive counselling are more motivated to study. They attend classes regularly. They pay attention and do their assignments. They understand that education is important for their future careers. The study also identified many challenges facing career counselling. These include lack of trained counsellors, lack of materials, and lack of support from school administrators and parents. Addressing these challenges will help improve career counselling services. This will benefit students and help them prepare for successful futures.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Plateau State Government should employ trained career counsellors for all secondary schools. This will ensure that students have access to professional guidance. The government should also provide regular training for counsellors to update their knowledge and skills.
2. School administrators should establish counselling units in their schools. They should provide counselling rooms and materials. They should also include counselling in the school timetable so students can access services without missing classes.
3. Career counselling programs should be strengthened in all schools. Schools should organize career talks, career fairs, and excursions. These activities expose students to different careers and help them make informed choices.

4. Parents should be educated about the importance of career counselling. Schools should organize parent meetings to discuss career issues. Parents should encourage their children to use counselling services and support their career choices.
5. The government and non-governmental organizations should provide resources for career counselling. These include career information books, videos, and career assessment tests. Schools should also have computers with internet access for career research.
6. Teachers should be trained to support career counselling. They should identify students who need career guidance and refer them to counsellors. They should also connect their subjects to career opportunities.
7. Regular monitoring and evaluation of career counselling programs should be done. This will help identify problems and improve services. Schools should keep records of counselling activities and outcomes.

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