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Assessment Of Influence Of Guidance/Counselling And Society On Misconception Of Vocational Education Among Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) Candidates In Yobe State Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the assessment of guidance/counselling and society on misconception of vocational education programmes among candidates of Unified and Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) in Yobe state, Nigeria. The study had five specific objectives, five research questions. The design of the study was correlational survey research design. Population of the study was 3419 students that registered for UTME in 2024/2025 academic session. The study adopted multistage sampling techniques with a sample of 342 students. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire of 4-points rating scale. The data were analysed using mean and standard deviations to answer the research questions. The findings of the study among others revealed that guidance service and Society significantly influenced the misconception of vocational education programmes among UTME candidates in Yobe state, Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was concluded that, the general misconception of people on vocational education programme has negative effect on attitude and interest of UTME candidate towards the programme in Nigeria. It was recommended among others that parents should be educated on the importance of vocational education programmes and Yobe state government should initiate orientation programmes that would educate potentials UTME candidates on the importance of vocational education in Nigeria.

Keywords: VTE, TVET, Guidance and counselling, UTME

INTRODUCTION

Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) is a form of education that focuses on providing individuals with practical skills and knowledge related to a specific trade or profession. Experts and national education policy emphasize the importance of VTE in preparing students for the workforce, focusing on learning and applying skills. The goals of VTE, as stated by experts and national policy on education, include reducing the number of unemployed, addressing the lack of skills in various industries, and

developing the economy through skilled workers. VTE equips students with the necessary knowledge and skills to address the shortage of essential human resources in the job market (Allaie, 2022). Ayonmike, Okwelle, and Okeke (2015) opined that VTE is concerned with the provision of knowledge and skills for the world of work to increase opportunities for productive empowerment and socio-economic development in knowledge, economics and the rapidly changing work environment. Likewise, VTE emphasizes practical skills and knowledge for self-employment. The programmes under VTE are designed to equip young people with skills, knowledge and competencies for the workforce for national development (Mitchell & Buntic, 2022). VTE plays a significant role in supporting economic development, necessitating the urgent use of information technology to enhance teaching quality and meet the demands of a rapidly growing global economy. Thus, VTE has significant role in providing learners with technical skills, knowledge and awareness needed for meaningful participation in work and daily life.

Despite the laudable objectives of vocational and technical education, there exists a prevalent misconception among secondary school students. This misperception often associates VTE with education for less privileged individuals, school dropouts, and those with low academic achievements, implying that there is a limited future prospect for participants. Diverse perceptions of technical vocational education influence its image and status, with a common misconception in society that it is only for dropouts and underachievers, impacting its reputation (Ambag & Bernarte, 2015). Adamu and Abdul (2015) reported that, in Nigeria, society, school counsellors, peers, parents and even teachers discourage career training in vocational education as the term the programme to be mean for students with low academic achievement that cannot study science and social science related programmes (Adamu & Abdul, 2017).

The consequence of this stigma attributed to VTE is multifaceted and extends to students, affecting their stigmatization, enrolment rates, and overall interest in vocational and technical programmes. Therefore, this may face the pressure of society to follow traditional educational methods, even if their skills and interests are in line with professional and technical fields. Similarly, in Nigeria, Akanbi (2017) announced that there was less than three per cent of overall enrolment in technical and vocational education programs as of 2016. The societal stigma attached to VTE can lead to a sense of inferiority among students pursuing such education, potentially discouraging them from fully engaging in the learning process which can lead to a mismatch between students' skills and career choices, leading to dissatisfaction and underutilization of talents.

Addressing these misconceptions requires a comprehensive understanding of factors that causes it. Numerous factors are responsible for misconception of VTE among students. For instance, Stone and Lewis (2013) opined that parents may contribute to their children misconceptions about vocational and technical education due to traditional biases favouring traditional academic paths as the perceived vocational education as a less prestigious option. The role of peer group on misconception was documented by Riegle-Crumb and King (2010) who reported that the peer influence plays a significant role in shaping perceptions of their friends towards a career. Schneider and Stevenson (1999) also argued that broader societal attitudes and stereotypes can contribute to the misconceptions surrounding vocational education. If society undervalues a programme and blue-collar professions, students may internalize these biases, affecting their career choices. Based on forgoing, Adamu and Markus (2017), Kura and Mukhtar (2019), Adamu (2020), Allaie (2022), Olowe et al., (2022) suggests for continue research work on causes of stigmata of vocational and technical education among students. The assertions urge the researcher to carry out this study.

Aims And Objectives Of The Study

The aim of the study was to assess the factors that influence the misconception of vocational and technical education programmes among UTME candidates in Yobe state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought;

- (i) .Examine the influence of school counsellors on misconception of vocational and technical education programmes among UTME candidates in Yobe state, Nigeria.

(ii) Assess the influence of societal perception on the misconception of vocational and technical education programmes among UTME candidates in Yobe state, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

(i) What is the influence of school counsellors on misconception of vocational and technical education programmes among UTME candidates in Yobe state, Nigeria?

(ii) What is the influence of societal perception on misconception of vocational and technical education programmes among UTME candidates in Yobe state, Nigeria?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Importance of Vocational Education

The importance of vocational education to an individual and the society at large cannot be overemphasized. Shavit and Muller (2010); Polat et al (2010), believed that vocational education enhances a students' chances of finding gainful employment. In addition to this, Colley et al. (2013), asserted that vocational education does not only increase the chances of gaining employment, it also equips the individual with the knowledge and technical skills as well as behavioural competence needed to increase the chances of employment and remain in employment. Apart from helping in getting the job and keeping the job, vocational education helps in creating the job which, as noted by Toner (2010), is achieved through innovation (technology diffusion), production, research and development.

It is with this knowledge of the crucial role of vocational education in economic and social development that Oluwale et al (2013), observed quite sadly that Nigeria has neglected vocational education, yet those who are paid millions to build infrastructures like roads and bridges in Nigeria are graduates of vocational education from abroad.

Vocational education has received significant interest in the current decade amongst the international policy community, such that vocational education has been recognized as a key player in development (McGrath, 2012). Apart from its role in preparing student for different occupations, Hyslop (2011), added that it also plays crucial life in their social lives. Igbinedion and Ojeaga (2012), posited that vocational education addresses the issue of poverty and added that it increases opportunities for international competitiveness. Uwamaiye and Clark (2013), stated that vocational education breeds professionalism because it exposes recipients to the specifics of a job and equips them with the skill required for the job. Apart from work experience, Ajokporise (2010), added that recipients acquire procedural knowledge needed for skill acquisition. Mustapha and Greenan (2012), explained that it has become a tool for addressing political, social, and economic crises in a nation.

Misconception of Vocational and Technical Education

Evidence from the available literature shows that the status of TVET programs in Nigeria is ineffective and inefficient with many challenges in achieving effective TVET programs in Nigeria (Akhuemonkhan & Raimi, 2013; Master, 2014). Tiamiyu and Babalola (2013) classified the challenges facing TVET in Nigeria into four groups which include: Student problems, college management factors, government factors, and quality factors. The authors also note that most of the students enrolled in vocational programs are not well prepared and have the skills to successfully continue their studies. Ayomike, Okwelle and Okeke (2013) identified the following as factors that students create as challenges to effective TVET programs in tertiary institutions in Nigeria: lack of interest in learning, incompetence in the programs TVET, lack of public understanding, poor education. , Lack of appropriate instructional materials such as textbooks, practical (useful) materials, peer group influence, and lack of self-confidence. In the opinion of Alavi et al. (2018), secondary schools that conduct vocational training programs always have a negative image among teachers and parents, regarding career paths;

The main reason for this attitude of parents in the opinion of Ijuolachi (2021), is the general preference for general education which is taken to meet the needs of young people with skills. Mushabab (2012) in Ijuolachi (2021), added that the bad perception about vocational education is: vocational education is seen as limiting the opportunities for career development, and preventing children from progressing to higher education. It's not all doom and gloom for vocational education. This is because, the understanding of

vocational education has changed over the years. Part of the reason for this change as Ijuolachi (2021) explained, is because parents and school counselors understand the impact of decision-making, they take the students' work.

Alavi et al. (2018) believes that parents have a significant influence in changing the minds of students who want to study in vocational education. Alavi et al. (2018) noted that the number of vocational graduates who find jobs after completing their training is increasing, and their salaries are comparable to those who have completed their education. Also, they noted that there has been an increase in employment opportunities for those who have completed vocational education, more than there is, for those who are seeking education.

Mokoro (2023) reported that the majority would prefer to be in general education. This may be due to the lack of vocational learning experience at the previous level of education. Nowadays, every high school graduate seems to want to go to university; this is a general education, which has no practical rules compared to TVET. Ewoh (2021) confirmed that VTE is now considered as the second option for the affected population and most of the university students. Therefore, the future of any nation is determined by the talented youth; therefore, making the right career choice should allow them to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for their future life as they explore and evaluate multiple career options to achieve future goals (Adetola & Popoola, 2021) . Still, the factors that influence agricultural education students in vocational education and technical education at the educational level as considered in this study are: environmental influences, parents or guardians, employment, job description, attitude student and peer group.

Previous research findings have shown a number of variables that influence students' attitudes toward Vocational Education. The researchers used different methods of research in different demographic factors to find out the variables that influence the student's attitude.

Olayemi and Ojetunde (2016) stated that the opinion of various stakeholders in education such as parents, teachers, and school counselors hindered the choice of applying for VTE by every student. Earlier, Olaitan (1996) complained that the poverty of the community for VTE was the cause of the program. Regardless of its place in the new system of education, this type of education is still considered as a type of education for the underprivileged and the children of privilege; and this perception seems to have contributed to the low participation in VTE programs which has resulted in unemployment in the country. Anthony (2013), to the social disadvantage of TVE, many developing countries are not interested in TVE, low participation and scare the participants because of poor policies and issues values from community members. According to Adamu and Markus (2017), many parents consider business education to mean academic and social, problem and non-legal issues, so organizations and consultants support this opinion. do the previous one. The author added that in short only a small number of students will be offering business courses at the high school level because most of the parents and a group of their relatives prevent students from choosing a course related to education.

Hina (2017) he found that parents have a great influence on students' attitudes towards vocational and technical education programs. Further, that most of the parents who responded have low economic, educational and professional status in the society. This means from the study; Parents of low socioeconomic status in the community encourage their children to enter vocational and technical education programs. Similarly, Lavendets (2012) found that the place of residence of parents influences their children to choose vocational and technical education programs as a career. Igbinedion (2011) in his study found that parents' level of education, occupation & income has a significant effect on students' choice of vocational and technical education programs.

Oviawe (2015) complained that the lack of understanding of society, development, lack of social behavior, lack of understanding, lack of exposure of students to the world of work through work visits, teachers, has a great impact on the understanding of vocational education and technology among students. Poor social perception, lack of understanding, low participation and discrimination against technical graduates in the industry (Igbinedion and Ojeaga, 2012). Similar results that family has an insignificant influence on children's misconception of vocational and technical education.

Guidance Services and Vocational and Technical Education

Career guidance is offered at institutions of learning such as schools, colleges and universities among others. Alavi et al. (2018), secondary schools that conduct vocational training programs always have a negative image among teachers and parents, regarding career paths; He added that vocational and technical education has a poor image among parents and teachers in the United States and Malaysia. In Malaysia at one time, people took the image of vocational high school as a place for bad boys, blue collar and second class (Eyre, 2011). Similarly, Lapan, Tucker, Kim and Fosciulek (2017) stated that the transition from high school to university or the world of work has been understood as one of the most difficult developmental challenges confronting adolescents and that schools play a pivotal role in guiding or misguiding the students towards a career.

Oviawe (2015) complained that the lack of understanding of society, development, lack of social behavior, lack of mutual understanding, lack of exposure of students to the world of work through work visits, teachers, has a great impact on the understanding of vocational education. and skills among students. Lack of social awareness, lack of understanding, low participation and discrimination against technical graduates in the industry (Igbinedion and Ojeaga, 2012). This decline in the state as shown in the participation of students in the Technical Education program has an impact on the production of skilled workers and skilled workers as set out in the National Education Policy (NPE, 2013). Lavendets et al (2012) on the research conducted reported that the level of parental education, profession and income has a significant effect on the choice of students for Technical Education and Technology.

Society and Vocational and Technical Education

As nowadays, the competition is said to be very intensive in the labour market, considerations like high wages and societal attached value are highly rated by the Millennials, when they are about to make a career choice. A study conducted in South Africa, showed that society considerations such as future high earning and income, largely influence a student's career decision (Abrahams, Jano, & van Lill, 2015). In Bangladesh, Nath, Babu, Kalam, and Hossain (2019) also reported that the role of teachers is very important in creating a positive image of TVET among young people.

Oviawe (2015) complained that the lack of understanding of society, development, lack of social behavior, lack of mutual understanding, lack of exposure of students to the world of work through work visits, teachers, has a great impact on the understanding of vocational education and technical education among students. Lack of social awareness, lack of understanding, low participation and discrimination against technical graduates in the industry (Igbinedion and Ojeaga, 2012).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology focused on the procedure adopted for data collection and relevant information required for conducting this study. It is presented under the following sub-headings: Research Design, Area of the study, Population of the Study, Sample and Sampling Technique, Instrument for Data Collection, Method of Data Collection, and Method of Data Analysis.

Research Design

The study adopted a correlational survey research design used for this study. Based on this submission, a correlational survey research design is considered suitable for the study since the study intends to use questionnaire to determine the career decision of secondary school students among UTME candidates in Yobe state, Nigeria.

Area of the Study

The area of this study was Yobe state, Nigeria. Yobe State has an estimated population of 2,321,591 as per the national head count of 2006. The major spoken languages are English, Kanuri, Hausa and Fulfulde. The state has 17 Local Government Areas, and with 14 Emirate Councils.

Population for the Study

The population for this study was 3419 senior secondary students that registered for UTME in 2022/2023 from 49 public secondary schools in Yobe State. Table 1 shows the breakdown of the study population:

Table 1: Population for the Study

S/NO	Edu. Zone	Number of Schools	UTME Candidates
1	Zone A	16	977
2	Zone B	18	1346
3	Zone C	15	1096
TOTAL		49	3419

Source: Yobe State Ministry of Education Damaturu (MOE, 2024).

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size was 10% of the entire population. This is in agreement with the view of Abiola (2012) who suggested that for a correlational survey research, a minimum sample size of 10% of the population is enough. Based on this, the sample size was 342.

The study adopted multiple sampling techniques for the study. In the first stage of the sampling, proportionate sampling technique was used to determine the number schools and students that were involved in the study using a fraction of 0.1. The decision was based on the imbalance in numbers of schools and the students in each zone. In the second stage, random sampling technique was used to select the names of schools that were used for data collection. In this approach, names of the schools in each educational zone were written separately, research assistant was employed to select two from each group and the schools selected were used for the study. The purposive sampling technique was employed to select the UTME candidates that participated in the study in each school. The distribution of the sample of the study is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of Sample of the study

S/NO	Edu. Zone	Number of Schools	UTME Candidates
1	Zone A	2	98
2	Zone B	4	134
3	Zone C	3	110
TOTAL		9	342

3.5 Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used for data collection in this study was a questionnaire. The instrument contains 60 questionnaire items and each construct have 10 items each. The instrument is a 4-point rating scale structured questionnaire structured as follows: Strongly Agree (SA), 4-poits; Agree (A), 3-points; Disagree (DA), 2-pooints; and Strongly Disagree (SD), 1-point.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected for this study were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version, 25. The package was employed to run mean scores and standard deviations to answer research questions. The decision rules for the mean were as follows: 0.5 - 1.49 Strongly Disagree; 1.50 - 2.49 Disagree; 2.50 - 3.49 Agree; and 3.50 - 4.00 Strongly Agree.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of research question were presented in Tables

Research Question one: *What is the influence of school counsellors on UTME candidates' misconception of vocational and technical education programmes in Yobe state, Nigeria?*

Table 3 presents the analysis of data of items on research question four with the lowest mean score of 2.40 (Disagreed) and the highest was 3.53 (Strongly Agreed). The standard deviations were 0.69 and 0.77 respectively. The cluster mean of the items stood at 2.81 (0.79). The cluster mean shows that respondents agreed with the items on guidance and counsellors' misconception of vocational and technical education programme.

Table 3: Means and Standard deviations on guidance and counsellors' misconception of vocational and technical education programme

S/no	Statement	Mean	Std dev	Remark
1.	Our school's guidance and counsellor believe that vocational and technical education is primarily for less privileged students.	3.35	0.97	A
2.	The guidance and counsellor's negative perception of vocational and technical education affects the way it is presented to students.	3.53	0.77	SA
3.	The guidance and counsellor's bias against vocational and technical education influences students' career choices.	3.27	0.81	A
4.	The guidance and counsellor adequately promotes alternative educational paths beyond traditional academic routes.	2.50	0.72	A
5.	Students feel encouraged by the guidance and counsellor to explore vocational and technical education opportunities.	2.45	0.71	D
6.	The guidance and counsellor's views on vocational education align with the diverse career aspirations of students.	2.40	0.69	D
7.	The guidance and counsellor adequately informs students about the potential benefits and opportunities in vocational and technical fields.	2.65	0.53	A
8.	The negative perception of vocational education by the guidance and counsellor affects the overall support system for such programs in our school.	2.53	0.69	A
9.	Students believe that the guidance and counsellor's opinion on vocational education is well-informed and unbiased.	2.54	0.51	D
10.	The guidance and counsellor adequately addresses the stereotypes associated with vocational and technical education.	2.85	0.82	A
Cluster mean		2.81	0.79	A

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Research Question two: *What is the influence of societal perception on UTME candidates' misconception of vocational and technical education programmes in Yobe state, Nigeria?*

The finding of items used answer research question five is documented in Table 4. From the result, the lowest item score was 2.40 with standard deviation of 0.69 and the highest was 3.45 (0.73). The mean scores were found under the scale of disagreed and strongly agreed respectively. The cluster mean was 2.99 (0.68). The cluster mean indicated that respondents agreed with items on societal perception of vocational and technical education programme.

Table 4: Means and Standard deviations on societal misconception of vocational and technical education programme

S/no	Statement	Mean	Std dev	Remark
11.	The general perception in society is that vocational and technical education programs are inferior to traditional academic pathways.	2.75	0.79	A
12.	Many people believe that pursuing vocational and technical education limits future career opportunities compared to a more traditional academic route.	2.85	0.82	A
13.	Society tends to undervalue the skills and knowledge gained through vocational and technical education programs.	2.90	0.84	A
14.	There is a stigma associated with choosing a vocational and technical education path, as opposed to pursuing a college degree.	2.40	0.69	D
15.	Vocational and technical education programs are often seen as a last resort for students who may not excel in traditional academic subjects.	2.70	0.78	A
16.	Parents and peers are more likely to encourage students to pursue a college education rather than a vocational or technical education.	3.45	0.73	A
17.	Media representations contribute to a negative image of vocational and technical education, reinforcing stereotypes and biases.	3.30	0.95	A
18.	The societal perception of vocational and technical education affects students' confidence and pride in their chosen educational path.	3.35	0.97	A
19.	Vocational and technical education programs are less likely to receive financial and community support compared to traditional academic institutions.	2.85	0.82	A
20.	Employers in various industries are less likely to value or prefer candidates with a vocational and technical education background.	3.30	0.95	A
Cluster mean		2.99	0.68	A

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

4.3 Summary of the Findings

The study revealed the following findings: -

- i. School counsellors significantly influenced the misconception of vocational and technical education programmes among UTME candidates in Yobe state, Nigeria.
- ii. The misconception of vocational and technical education programme among UTME candidates in Yobe state, Nigeria was significantly influenced by societal perception.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study was on assessment of guidance/counselling and society of misconception of Vocational and Technical Education Programme among University and Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) Candidates in Yobe State, Nigeria. Survey research design was used for this study. The population for this study was 3419 students that registered for UTME in 2022/2023 and the researcher sampled 342 students for the study. The instrument for data collection was validated questionnaire with Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0.79. The data collected for this study were analysed using mean scores and

standard deviations to answer research questions. The results show that guidance service and Societal have significant influence on the misconception of vocational and technical education programme among UTME candidates in Yobe state, Nigeria.

Conclusion

The outcome of the study with regards to the misconceptions of guidance service and Society significantly influenced the misconception of vocational and technical education programme among the UTME candidates in Yobe state. Thus, this suggests internal and external forces determine the misconception of UTME candidates towards vocational and technical education programme in the state. The study concluded that, the role of external factors towards vocational and technical education programme influences UTME candidates' misconception of the programme. Consequently, the idea of providing youths with requisite skills needed for technological development and self-reliance through vocational and technical education programme would not be achieved if misconception people had on the programme continue to be the same.

Recommendations

Based on the outcome and the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made: -

- i. The federal and state government should educate parents on the importance of vocational and technical education programme to students.
- ii. Principals of secondary schools should organize career awareness that would educate potential UTME candidates on the usefulness of vocational and technical education programme.
- iii. Ministry of education through quality assurance division should provide counselling service to teachers that would enable them to understand the status vocational and technical education programme in Nigeria.
- iv. Experts in vocational and technical education should initiate a programme that would to address the misconception of schools' counsellors on vocational and technical education programme in Yobe state.
- v. The Yobe state ministry of education should organize general campaign programme that would educate the general public on their misconception of vocational and technical education programme in the state.

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