

Career Guidance Strategies for Increasing Students' Choice of Vocational and Technical Education Subjects in Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State

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Abstract

The study focused on career guidance strategies for increasing students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools in Ebonyi State. The study was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised of 3,585 teachers of Vocational and Technical Education subjects from public secondary schools in the three Education Zones in Ebonyi State. Sample size of 564 teachers of Vocational and Technical Education subjects was used for the study. A structured questionnaire containing 20 items was developed by the researchers and used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts and tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha. The overall reliability coefficient obtained was 0.87. Data collected were analyzed using mean to answer the research questions, and t-test statistic was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that career orientation guidance strategies included: introducing students to vocational and technical education options early in their academic journey; arranging practical experiences where students can get first-hand exposure to vocational and technical careers among others. The null hypotheses tested showed that gender of teachers and those in junior and senior secondary school did not show significant differences in their mean responses on career information guidance strategies for increasing students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools in Ebonyi State. The study concluded that use of career orientation and computer-assisted strategies by teachers, school administrators and practitioners in providing vocational guidance to students increase students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools in Ebonyi State. It was recommended that school administrators/Principal should organize career fairs that bring together industry professionals, employers, and students to promote vocational and technical education subjects and career opportunities.

Keywords: *Career Guidance, Strategies, Students', Choice, Vocational and Technical Education Subjects*

Introduction

Education is a significant tool for promoting learning and the development of skills and knowledge that lead to self-sufficiency and better living standards. Education can be viewed through three distinct lenses: process, product and discipline (Deng, 2024). As a process, education refers to the dynamic and ongoing interactions between teachers, students and the learning environment. This perspective focuses on teaching methods and strategies; learning experiences and activities; social interactions and relationships and personal growth and development. It is foundation for modernity, science, and technology, and it is for this reason that all governments around the world place high value on education. It is intended to pass on to future generations existing knowledge of their physical environment, to introduce individuals to the organization of society, to teach them skills for performing their jobs and enjoying their leisure, and to instill sound moral values in them for personal and societal benefits. Education plays a significant role in preparing students for vocational and technical education (VTE) by providing them with foundational knowledge, skills and competencies that are essential for success in VTE programme after graduations. Education helps students with solid foundation in subjects like mathematics, science, and language, which are crucial for VTE programmes. It also

exposes students to various career options, enabling them to make informed decisions about their future careers.

Career guidance refers to services designed to help people of all ages and stages of life make educational, training, and employment decisions and manage their careers (Partha, 2020). Career guidance is a set of activities that prepares people of any age at a specific point in their lives to identify their own abilities, competencies, and interests and to make decisions that affect their education, employment, and other areas where they might gain and apply abilities and competencies. This definition was provided by the Council of European Union in 2004. On the other hand, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Ilu and Adomeh (2020) defined career guidance as a collection of services and initiatives set up to help people of any age at any stage of their lives make decisions about their education, training, and careers and manage those decisions. According to Watts and Fretwell in Don and Nguyen (2015), the purpose of career guidance is to enable people of all ages and stages of life to make decisions about their education, training, and occupations as well as to manage their careers. Career guidance consist of three primary components: career education, career counseling and career information (Watts and Fretwell in Don and

Nguyen, 2015). Career guidance assists students in reflecting on their goals, interests, credentials, and talents. It assists students in comprehending the labor market and educational institutions and connecting this to what they know about themselves. Career guidance attempts to teach people how to plan for and make decisions about their education and employment. For career guidance to be successful in attracting students there is need for the development of strategies.

A strategy is a plan that is created to attain a certain goal. Amesi, Akpomi, and Okwuanaso (2014) defined strategy as the purposeful selection of several activities to produce a distinct blend of value. Strategy is a systematic approach to managing a given situation through re-positioning of activities and functions. Ofoyuru and Too-Okema in Nwachi and Ndimele, (2021) defined strategy as the art of devising or implementing thoughtful plans or techniques toward a goal. Thus, career guidance strategies are the systematic approaches utilized by secondary schools for attracting students to study VTE subjects.

Career guidance strategies are essential in the secondary school system for addressing students' physical, social, emotional, vocational, and academic issues in order to improve their wellness, academic performance, and career choice making. This may have prompted Eremie and Jackson

(2019) to argue that every teacher should be guidance focused in the process of carrying out his or her duties with the goal of creating an influence in the lives of the students. Partha (2020) asserted that career guidance strategy is a plan for moving our lives in the right direction. Nwachi and Ndimele (2021) stated that the career guidance strategies available in schools and communities in general include information services, testing services, placement services, appraisal services, orientation services, evaluation services, referral services, research services, follow-up services, consultation, co-ordination, collaboration, instruction, and institutional support. Algadheeb and Abdulrahman (2015) asserted that career orientation is one of the career guidance strategies that influence how students make decisions about their own lives. Kuijpers, Meijers and Gundy (2011) stated that effective career orientation guidance strategies can have a profound impact on students' career choices and outcomes. Nwachi and Ndimele (2021) noted that career guidance programs can improve students' self-awareness, career awareness and decision-making skills. Watts (2013) noted that career guidance can help students develop a better understanding of the labor market and the skills required for different careers. Wang (2012) noted that in senior secondary schools, the involvement of guidance counselors, parents, and non-governmental agencies is crucial in

improving students' enrollment in vocational and technical education programmes. Ezeji and Okorie (2016) reported that senior secondary students were more likely to choose VTE subjects aligned with their career aspirations compared to junior secondary students. They attributed this to increased maturity and awareness of job market demands at the senior level. Okocha (2019) reported that while junior secondary students showed broader interest in various vocational subjects, senior secondary students tended to specialize based on perceived strengths and future goals. Partha (2020) opined that academic information, career information, group guidance, counseling, orientation, and assessment are part of the career guidance strategies that could help increase students choice of vocational and technical subjects.

Career orientation according to Nwachi and Ndimele (2021) is crucial to a student's professional development. Career orientations refer to the patterns and actions that demonstrate a person's willingness to pursue or apply themselves to a certain occupation (Algadheeb and Abdulrahman, 2015). Taken together, these orientations have an impact on a person's decision-making process when it comes to choosing an employment. Career orientations are crucial in as much as they focus on a person's unique skills. Recognizing or identifying a person's interests and skills is seen to be one of the

most challenging and complex jobs that educators and organizational leaders must complete in order to help pupils and workers choose the right vocations. Algadheeb and Abdulrahman asserted that career orientation is one of the career guidance strategies that influence how students make decisions about their own lives. Just like career mentoring strategy, computer assisted guidance strategy is another strategy that is considered in the present study.

Computer-assisted career guidance strategy is a programme used to teach career decision-making processes, access and retrieval of information, and self-assessment (Papakota, 2016). Computer-assisted career guidance is offered in a variety of ways and with various objectives. It is offered as a tool for information collecting and job searching as a career resource, similar to career portals and online career exams (John, Udofia, Udoh and Anagbogu, 2016). On the other hand, it is offered as a means for people to seek advice and assistance from counsellors in a virtual world as a different career counseling strategy from face-to-face counseling (e.g. telephone counselling, email counselling, and online chat). There are numerous resources that offer details on careers, as well as the education and training necessary for entry-level employment (Partha, 2020). There are several websites that can give information on the job market, future-demanding professions and places to get

education and training as well as professional associations. Visit several areas of employment and speak with the workers there. Partha (2020) reveal that computer-assisted career guidance systems can provide students with personalized career guidance, helping them to identify their strengths, interests, and career aspirations. Udofia, Udoh and Anagbogu (2016) opine that despite the importance of VTE subjects, many students lack awareness and guidance on these options, leading to a mismatch between their career aspirations and the skills required in the labor market, computer-assisted career guidance strategies can help bridge this gap by providing students with accurate and relevant information about VTE subjects and career pathways. Harris-Bowlsbey (2013) noted that computer-assisted career guidance systems can increase students' knowledge of career options, improve their decision-making skills, and enhance their career maturity. Galliot (2017) noted that computer-assisted career guidance strategies can help students to make informed choices about VTE subjects by providing them with interactive and engaging career exploration tools. Cerrito and Behun (2020) opined that there are various types of computer-assisted career guidance tools and approaches that can be employed to increase students' interest in a career. Leveraging computer-assisted career guidance strategies, educators and career guidance counselors can promote VTE subjects among students and

help them make informed decisions about their future careers.

Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) subjects in secondary schools are curriculum areas designed to equip students with practical skills, technical knowledge, and work-related competencies for specific trades, occupations, and careers, rather than purely academic or theoretical knowledge. In the Nigerian context, they are defined by the Federal Ministry of Education as: Subjects that prepare students for direct entry into the world of work, for self-employment, or for further training in technical colleges, polytechnics, and apprenticeship programme. According to (FGN, 2014), the National Policy on Education in Nigeria has specific aims and objectives related to career orientation, with the goal of achieving technological and economic advancement in the country. At the junior secondary level (JSS), there are seven identified program areas of pre-vocational education. These program areas are integrated into the curriculum at the JSS level, and at the senior secondary level (SSS), students have the opportunity to focus on three components of each program in their first year of SSS. This approach allows students to engage in more in-depth study and preparation, not only for the SSS final examination but also for their transition into the workforce or further studies. The following outlines the structure of pre-vocational and vocational subjects in

Nigerian secondary schools, as specified in the 2014 edition of the National Policy on Education. It is important to note that these subjects are elective, except for Introductory Technology (Basic Technology), which is listed as a core subject at the JSS level. At the Junior Secondary School (JSS) level according to Oduma (2022), the pre-vocational elective subjects in Nigerian secondary schools include: Agricultural Science, Business Studies, Home Economics, Local Crafts, Computer Education, Fine Arts (Culture and Creative Arts), Music and Introductory Technology (Core subject at JSS level). At the Senior Secondary School (SSS) level, the vocational education elective subjects in Nigerian secondary schools include: Agricultural Science, Applied Electricity, Book-keeping and Accounting, Building Construction, Auto Mechanics, Commerce, Computer Education, Electronics, Clothing and Textiles, Food and Nutrition, Home Management, Metal Work, Technical Drawing, Wood Work, Shorthand, Typewriting, Fine Arts, Music (Ofulue, Oduma & Ogbaga 2025). These subjects provide students with the opportunity to specialize in various vocational fields, ranging from agriculture, business, and technology to arts and crafts (Seyi, 2014). Students can choose these subjects based on their interests and career aspirations, acquiring practical skills and knowledge that can prepare them for future employment or further studies in related fields. However,

increasing students' choice of VTE subjects in secondary schools could be affected by certain factors related to the students such as students' gender, family background and societal factors. Mayange and Umar (2018) posited that student's background and personal attributes could influence interest and vocational aspirations. Mayange and Umar further averred that gender differences could play a major role in attracting students into VTE subjects.

The influence of gender on our behavior is a significant factor that can be traced as one of the causes of this phenomenon. Gender, both biologically and socially, has an impact on human behavior and preferences. Our behaviors are influenced by biological activities specific to our gender (Pooreum and Dohyeon, 2020). When it comes to career choices, gender facts can be viewed from a social perspective. Sex which is a term associated with gender is defined as the categorization of individuals as male, female or intersex. These include chromosomes, (e.g., XX, XY), hormone level and reproductive anatomy. According to Godfredtson in Mayange and Umar, adolescence students have an understanding of the sex type and prestige level of common careers, for instance, female students might avoid choosing careers that are generally perceived as low social prestige. Similarly, a study conducted by Nwachi and Ndimele (2021) revealed that there is no significant

difference in the mean rating of male and female students on the influence of career guidance strategies on students' career choice in secondary schools.

On the other hand, the first three years of secondary education in Nigeria take place at the junior secondary school level. This stage of education is intended to provide students with a broad, general education and equip them with basic knowledge and skills (Evaluation World, 2021). The final three years of secondary education in Nigeria occur at the senior secondary school level. At this stage, students are expected to specialize in certain subjects based on their interests and career aspirations. The level of education attained at the secondary school level can significantly influence students' career choices and interest in vocational and technical education subjects. Students who perform well academically at the JSS level and are able to progress to the more specialized SSS curriculum may be more inclined to pursue university education and professional careers. In contrast, students who lack access to quality secondary education, particularly in rural areas, may be more likely to seek out vocational and technical training programs after completing JSS. These opinions of scholars are however, based on reasoning, models or speculated career guidance strategies for increasing students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools in

Ebonyi State; rather than on direct observations or measurement. It is against this backdrop that the researcher conducted the study to empirically identify the career guidance strategies for increasing students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Statement of Problem

Vocational Technical Education programme provides practical and theoretical instruction to those who need employment in commerce and industry or in any type of enterprise which utilizes tools and machinery. It is believed that the acquisition of practical skills relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life could lead to self-sustainability or self-reliance. Sadly, students in secondary schools appear to have a negative attitude towards VTE subjects in their school. Experience in supervision and students' job orientation shows that students dislike works or employment tasks that will put them to handling equipment and machinery either in the laboratory or in the work field. In Ebonyi State secondary schools, the researcher is worried about the career guidance strategies that could bridge this gap, empowering students to explore viable career paths and make informed subjects choice is yet to ascertain. This makes many students in Ebonyi State secondary school to struggle to make informed decisions, often overlooking Vocational and

Technical Education (VTE) subjects. Despite the growing demand for skilled workers in Technical and Vocational fields, secondary schools in Ebonyi State often overlook Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) subjects, opting instead for traditional academic paths. This phenomenon is attributed to inadequate career guidance, limited exposure to VTE opportunities, and misconceptions about VTE careers. The problem of this study is therefore, what career guidance strategies should be used for promoting students' choice of Vocational and Technical Education subjects in secondary schools in Ebonyi State?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the career guidance strategies for increasing students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools in Ebonyi State. Specifically, the study identified:

- 1 career orientation guidance strategies for increasing students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools in Ebonyi State.
- 2 computer-assisted career guidance strategies for increasing students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools in Ebonyi State

Methodology

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the career orientation guidance strategies for increasing students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools in Ebonyi State?
2. What are the computer-assisted career guidance strategies for increasing students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools in Ebonyi State?

Hypothesis

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

1. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of teachers in junior and senior secondary schools on career orientation guidance strategies for increasing students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools in Ebonyi State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on computer assisted career guidance strategies for increasing students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools in Ebonyi State

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in Ebonyi State, located in the South-South region of Nigeria. The population of the study comprised of 1,585 teachers of Vocational and Technical Education subjects from public secondary schools in the three Education Zones in Ebonyi State. Sample size of 563 teachers of Vocational and Technical Education subjects was used for the study. A structured questionnaire containing 20 items entitled: Career Fairs Guidance Strategies for Increasing Students' Choice of Vocational and Technical Education Subjects in Secondary Schools Questionnaire (CGSQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts and tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha. The overall reliability coefficient obtained was 0.87. Five

hundred and sixty-three (563) copies of the questionnaire were administered with the help of five research assistants, while 542 (representing 96.3% return rate) were retrieved from the respondents. Data collected were analysed using mean to answer the research questions. The decision rule was to agree with any item that has a mean score of 2.50 and above as a strategy for increasing students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools in Ebonyi State and to disagree with any item that has a mean score below 2.50. For test of null hypotheses, t-test statistic was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule was to accept the null hypothesis if P-value is greater than 0.05 and to reject the null hypothesis if the P-value was less than or equal to 0.05.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the career orientation guidance strategies for increasing students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools in Ebonyi State? The data providing answers to the above research question are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Career Orientation guidance Strategies for Increasing Students' Choice of Vocational and Technical Education Subjects in Secondary Schools

S/N	Items on career orientation guidance strategies	N	Mean	Std.	Remarks
1.	Introducing students to vocational and technical education options early in their academic journey.	542	3.33	.67	Agree
2.	Arranging practical experiences such as apprenticeship where students can get first-hand exposure to vocational and technical careers	542	3.40	.61	Agree
3.	Integrating vocational and technical education into the regular curriculum by incorporating case studies.	542	3.42	.54	Agree
4.	Running intra-school contests in trades like carpentry, catering, ICT, and fashion, rewarding winners to build pride and interest in technical skills	542	3.32	.62	Agree
5.	Set up Tech, Trade, or Entrepreneurship Clubs where students meet weekly for career guidance under teacher supervision.	542	3.30	.69	Agree

6. Administering interest inventory to help students identify their interest	542	3.41	.61	Agree
7. Administering personality assessment tests to help students identify their personality traits which can assist them in making informed career decisions.	542	3.37	.60	Agree
8. Providing resources and support for students interested in entrepreneurship, including workshops and business plan competitions	542	3.32	.61	Agree
9. Offering vocational training subjects as extracurricular activities in specific trades or technical fields.	542	3.28	.71	Agree
10. Publishing career manuals for careers specific to vocational and technical education	542	3.34	.65	Agree

Table 1 shows that all the strategies have mean scores ranging from 3.28 to 3.42. This implies that the career orientation guidance strategies for increasing students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects include: introducing students to vocational and technical education options early in their academic journey; arranging practical experiences where students can get first-hand exposure to vocational and technical careers;

integrating vocational and technical education into the regular curriculum by incorporating case studies; providing scholarships, grants or financial incentives specifically targeted towards students interested in vocational and technical education; administering career assessments or aptitude tests to help students identify their skills among others.

Research Question 2: What are the computer-assisted career guidance strategies for increasing students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools in Ebonyi State? The data providing answers to the above research question are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Computer-Assisted Career Guidance Strategies for Increasing Students' Choice of Vocational and Technical Education Subjects in Secondary Schools

S/N	Items on computer-assisted career strategies	N	Mean	Std.	Remarks
11.	Providing online tools that help students match their interest with suitable vocational and technical career options.	542	3.30	.67	Agree
12.	Host online career fairs where artisans, and tech entrepreneurs present via Zoom/Google Meet	542	3.33	.66	Agree
13.	Making available comprehensive online resources that provide information on different vocational and technical careers	542	3.29	.70	Agree
14.	Utilizing online platforms that offer interactive modules for students to develop specific vocational and technical skills, such as coding, technical drawing, automotive repair, or culinary arts.	542	3.33	.63	Agree
15.	Facilitating virtual work-based learning experiences, such as online internships or apprenticeships, where students can gain practical exposure to vocational and technical industries.	542	3.37	.60	Agree
16.	Providing online platforms for students to access career guidance counseling services that allow them to receive personalized guidance.	542	3.40	.58	Agree

17. Arranging virtual job shadowing opportunities where students can observe professionals working in vocational and technical fields through video recordings or live-streaming sessions	542	3.29	.70	Agree
18. Connecting students with mentors in technical fields via email, WhatsApp, or mentoring apps.	542	2.94	.94	Agree
19. Creating online platforms or communities where students can connect with professionals	542	3.05	.87	Agree
20. Creating a page or WhatsApp group dedicated to VTE careers.	542	3.16	.77	Agree

Table 2 shows that all the strategies have mean scores ranging from 2.29 to 3.40. This implies that the computer-assisted career guidance strategies include: providing online tools that help students match their interest with suitable vocational and technical career options; offering virtual platforms that allow students to explore various vocational and technical career paths through interactive

videos; making available comprehensive online resources that provide information on different vocational and technical careers; utilizing online platforms that offer interactive modules for students to develop specific vocational and technical skills, such as coding, technical drawing, automotive repair, or culinary among others.

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of teachers in junior and senior secondary schools on career orientation guidance strategies for increasing students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

The t-test analysis of data collected to test the null hypothesis three is presented in Table 3

Table 3: t-test Analysis on the Career Orientation Guidance Strategies for Increasing Students' Choice of Vocational and Technical Education Subjects in Secondary Schools Based on Level

Category of Respondents	N	Mean	Std.	Df	t-cal	Alpha	P-Value	Decision
Junior Secondary	255	3.34	.69	540	.45	0.05	.630	Not significant
Senior Secondary	295	3.32	.65					

The result of the t-test analyses in Table 3 indicates that nine out of ten strategies have P- values .630 which are greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of teachers in junior and senior secondary schools. This implies that there was no significant

difference in the mean responses of teachers in junior and senior secondary schools on career orientation guidance strategies for increasing students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female on computer assisted career guidance strategies for increasing students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools in Delta State.

The t-test analysis of data collected to test the null hypothesis five is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: t-test Analysis on the Computer Assisted Career Guidance Strategies for Increasing Students' Choice of Vocational and Technical Education Subjects in Secondary Schools based on Gender

Category of Respondents	N	Mean	Std.	Df	t-cal	Alpha	P-Value	Decision
Male	254	3.28	.65	540	.670	0.05	.196	Not Significant
Female	288	3.32	.69					

Table 4 shows that most of the strategies have their respective P-values greater than the Alpha level of 0.05 at degree of freedom of 540 indicating that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on computer assisted career guidance strategies.

Discussion

The findings of the study showed that the respondents indicated that all the identified strategies are career orientation guidance strategies for increasing students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools. The findings of this study are in consonance with Algadheeb and Abdulrahman (2015) who asserted that career orientation is one of the career guidance strategies that influence how students make decisions about their own lives. The findings are also in line with Kuijpers, Meijers and Gundy (2011) who stated that effective career orientation guidance strategies can have a profound impact on students' career choices and outcomes. The findings corroborated with the research of Nwachi and

Ndimele (2021) which shows that career guidance programs can improve students' self-awareness, career awareness and decision-making skills. The findings of the study are supported by Watts (2013) who noted that career guidance can help students develop a better understanding of the labor market and the skills required for different careers.

Findings further revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of teachers in junior and senior secondary schools on all the career orientation guidance strategies for increasing students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools in Ebonyi State. The findings are consistent with Wang (2012) who noted that in senior secondary schools, the involvement of guidance counselors, parents, and non-governmental agencies is crucial in improving students' enrollment in vocational and technical education programmes. The findings contradict Ezeji and Okorie (2016) who reported that senior secondary students were more likely to choose VTE subjects aligned with their

career aspirations compared to junior secondary students. They attributed this to increased maturity and awareness of job market demands at the senior level. Similarly, it also aligns with Okocha (2019) who reported that while junior secondary students showed broader interest in various vocational subjects, senior secondary students tended to specialize based on perceived strengths and future goals.

The findings of the study in research question two showed all the identified strategies are computer-assisted career guidance strategies for increasing students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools. The findings are supported by the research conducted by Partha (2020) which reveal that computer-assisted career guidance systems can provide students with personalized career guidance, helping them to identify their strengths, interests, and career aspirations. The findings of this study is also in agreement with John, Udofia, Udoh and Anagbogu (2016) who opine that despite the importance of VTE subjects, many students lack awareness and guidance on these options, leading to a mismatch between their career aspirations and the skills required in the labor market, computer-assisted career guidance strategies can help bridge this gap by providing students with accurate and relevant information about VTE subjects and career pathways. The findings is in tandem with the studies of Harris-Bowlsbey (2013)

that have shown that computer-assisted career guidance systems can increase students' knowledge of career options, improve their decision-making skills, and enhance their career maturity. Moreover, the findings of the study is in line with Galliot (2017) who noted that computer-assisted career guidance strategies can help students to make informed choices about VTE subjects by providing them with interactive and engaging career exploration tools. These tools can help students to identify their strengths and interests, explore career options, and develop a plan for achieving their career goals. Furthermore, the findings is in agreement with Cerrito and Behun (2020) who opined that there are various types of computer-assisted career guidance tools and approaches that can be employed to increase students' interest in a career. Leveraging computer-assisted career guidance strategies, educators and career guidance counselors can promote VTE subjects among students and help them make informed decisions about their future careers. Further analysis indicated that the null hypothesis is accepted. In other words, there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on the computer assisted career guidance strategies for increasing students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools in Ebonyi State. The findings are in contrast with Rukewe and Oats (2020), who observed that societal norms, cultural

expectations, and gender stereotypes may influence the type of careers that individuals, particularly female students, perceive as suitable or attainable. The findings also contradict the opinion of Cheryan, Master and Meltzoff (2015) who noted that gender can influence the usability and accessibility of computer-assisted career guidance tools. The findings also agree with Genrich, Toleman and Roberts (2014) who observed that it is important to examine how gender moderates the effectiveness of computer-assisted career guidance in attracting students, particularly those of underrepresented gender, in vocational and technical education programmes. Research can explore how gender-specific career information and resources are incorporated into computer-assisted guidance systems.

Conclusion

The study concluded that introducing students to vocational and technical education options early in their academic journey, arranging practical experiences such as apprenticeship where students can get first-hand exposure to vocational and technical careers, running intra-school contests in various vocational trades and rewarding winners to build pride, setting up trade clubs where students meet periodically for career guidance under teacher supervision and administering interest inventory to help students identify vocational trades of their interest are some of the career orientation

guidance strategies that could be used to increase students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools in Ebonyi State. It is further concluded that computer-assisted career guidance strategies such as providing online tools that help students match their interest with suitable vocational and technical career options, hosting online career fairs where artisans, and tech entrepreneurs present via zoom/google meet, make available comprehensive online resources that provide information on different vocational and technical careers, utilizing online platforms that offer interactive modules for students to develop specific vocational and technical skills, providing online platforms for students to access career guidance counseling services that allow them to receive personalized guidance, arranging virtual job shadowing opportunities where students can observe professionals working in vocational and technical fields through video recordings or live-streaming sessions among others should be adopted for to increase students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools in Ebonyi State. Finally, the study also concluded that gender and school levels (Junior/senior), do not affect opinions on career orientation guidance strategies and computer-assisted career guidance strategies for increasing students' choice of vocational and technical education subjects in secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that:

1. School administrators should develop career orientation programme that help students to identify potential career pathways in vocational and technical subjects. Teachers should encourage students to participate to explore different VTE subjects.
2. Federal and State Government should provide computer assisted career guidance in secondary schools to

provide students with personalized career guidance and information about VTE subjects. Curriculum planners should incorporate computer assisted career guidance system into the curriculum to provide students with personalized career guidance and information.

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