

**INFLUENCE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES ON THE
CAREER CHOICE OF FEMALE SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EDO
STATE**

BY

Diana Awodesi OGHIEASOR

EDU2005831

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

BENIN CITY

FEBRUARY 2025

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL
EVALUATION AND COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY, FACULTY OF
EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE BACHELOR OF EDUCATION
B.Sc (Ed) HONOURS DEGREE IN GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING**

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CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned, hereby certify that this research work was carried out by Diana Awodesi OGHIEASOR with Matriculation Number: EDU2005831 of the Department of Educational Evaluation and Counselling Psychology, Faculty of Education, University Of Benin, Benin City.

Dr. K.O. Oaikhena
(Project Supervisor)

Date

Dr. C. P. Ojiyi
(Project Coordinator)

Date

Rev. Fr. A. A. Adubale (Ph.D.)
Head of Department

Date

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty, the Creator of the heavens and earth.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the Influence of guidance and Counselling Service on the career choice of female secondary school student in Edo State. To achieve the purpose of the study 5 research questions were raised and answered. The descriptive survey research method was adopted for the study. The sample for the study comprised 150 female students, with 50 students selected from each of the three secondary schools in Egor, Oredo and Ikpobahoka local government area of Edo state. Data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics, precisely mean and standard deviation.

The research instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled “Influence of Guidance and Counselling Services on Career Choice Questionnaire (IGCSCCQ).” The constructed questionnaire for the study was presented to the project Supervisor to confirm for content validity. The cronbrach Alpha method was used to determine reliability of the instrument. The questionnaire was administered to a group of 20 respondents which were not part of the population. A cronbrach Alpha coefficient Of .832 was obtained, this shows that the instrument was reliable.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

The selection of a profession stands as one of the most significant choices confronted by students in secondary education. Atsuwe and Achebulu (2018) emphasize that the journey of a career is often fraught with challenges. When faced with decisions, the profession one chooses can have significant implications both in the present and in the future. It encompasses an individual's entire existence, shaping their earnings, social circle, style of attire, societal impact, and frequently, the level of risk they encounter. According to Ibrahim, et al (2019), various factors influence career choice, including globalization, socialization, role models, social support, and the availability of resources like information and finance. Bender asserts that factors such as living context, personal aptitudes, social connections, and the level of educational achievement also play significant roles in this process (Alairu, 2017). Hewitt posits that the determinants of career selection may be categorized as either intrinsic, extrinsic, or a combination of both. He elaborates that a significant number of individuals are swayed by the professions their parents endorse, while others pursue careers shaped by the educational paths they have chosen. Some individuals opt to pursue their passions, irrespective of the financial rewards, while others select careers that promise substantial income.

The matter of selecting a career path has gained considerable importance in modern educational frameworks, especially for female students who encounter distinct social and

cultural obstacles in their academic and professional growth. In Edo State, Nigeria, there is an increasing recognition of the importance of providing effective guidance and counselling services to support female secondary school students in making informed career choices (Abubakar, 2019). The selection of a career is a pivotal element in shaping a student's future, profoundly affecting their life path, personal growth, and societal impact. Nonetheless, a significant number of students, particularly females, encounter various challenges in recognizing and selecting suitable career paths as a result of socio-cultural, economic, and educational influences. This underscores the importance of having organized guidance and counselling services in educational institutions to assist students in making informed career choices (Bolu-Steve & Oredugba, 2017).

The notion of guidance and counselling pertains to the process through which individuals receive support in comprehending themselves and their surroundings, enabling them to make well-informed decisions regarding different facets of life, such as career options. As noted by Ibrahim, et al (2019), the provision of guidance and counselling services within educational institutions is crucial for students to develop an understanding of their individual strengths, weaknesses, interests, and aptitudes, all of which play a significant role in selecting an appropriate career path. The significance of these services is especially pronounced for female students, who frequently encounter extra challenges, including gender stereotyping, cultural norms, and restricted access to career information in fields traditionally dominated by males (Alairu, 2017). Consequently, the function of school counsellors is essential in addressing these challenges and enabling female

students to follow career paths that resonate with their ambitions and skills (Atsuwe & Achebulu, 2018).

Career guidance assists individuals in making informed vocational choices and facilitates their ongoing development from educational settings into adult responsibilities. Through the guidance offered by a professional counsellor in diverse educational settings, a student gains insight into their identity and the surrounding environment, encompassing career prospects and the formulation of personal lifestyles (Kay, et al,2019). Career aspirations ought to commence in pre-primary education and persist throughout an individual's lifetime. Nigerian youths often hold unrealistic occupational ambitions due to a lack of awareness regarding vocational information about specific careers, which can sometimes lead to less-than-favorable outcomes. Palmer and Salami observed that a significant number of individuals expressed a desire to pursue careers in Medicine, Engineering, Law, Architecture, and Pharmacy following their secondary education, despite lacking the requisite qualifications or preparation for these fields (Ibrahim et al., 2019).

Edo State, akin to numerous other regions in Nigeria, exhibits a traditional society where gender roles are profoundly entrenched. This has traditionally influenced the professional paths accessible to female students, with numerous individuals being guided towards careers deemed more "appropriate" for women, including teaching, nursing, and secretarial roles (Ehimika & Omoike, 2021). Nonetheless, the worldwide movement advocating for gender equality and the advancement of women in the professional realm

has highlighted the significance of broadening career prospects for female students. With an increasing number of women making significant strides in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, it is essential for guidance and counselling services in educational institutions to evolve. These services should offer precise career information, introduce a variety of career paths, and inspire students to chase their aspirations, regardless of societal norms.

The impact of guidance and counselling services on the career decisions of female secondary school students in Edo State represents an important field of inquiry with considerable consequences for educational policy and practice. As the realm of professional pathways transforms, it becomes imperative to equip learners with the essential guidance to adeptly maneuver through their options. This research aims to enhance the current understanding by examining the effects of these services on female students, with the ultimate goal of fostering gender equity in career advancement within the region (Saleh et al., 2020).

Statement of the Problem

Guidance and counselling play a vital role in helping students navigate career selection by providing tailored support to align their strengths, interests, and aspirations with suitable career paths. For female students, particularly in societies like Edo State, where socio-cultural norms often shape career expectations, guidance and counselling should empower them to explore non-traditional fields, overcome gender-based barriers, and make informed choices that reflect their ambitions. Ideally, guidance and counselling

services should help female students gain career awareness, foster confidence, and encourage participation in diverse professional sectors, including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields, which have been traditionally male-dominated.

However, the current practice in many schools in Edo State has significant shortcomings. Many secondary schools lack trained guidance counsellors or functional guidance and counselling services altogether. In cases where such services exist, they are often under-resourced and inadequately implemented. As a result, female students frequently lack access to career information, mentorship, and counselling that address their specific needs. Furthermore, cultural norms continue to restrict many female students to traditional career options, such as teaching or nursing, which may not align with their interests or abilities. These limitations hinder the ability of guidance and counselling services to fulfil their intended purpose of promoting informed, diverse, and equitable career choices.

This study proposes a comprehensive investigation into the influence of guidance and counselling services on the career decisions of female secondary school students in Edo State. By identifying the gaps in existing practices and understanding how socio-cultural and institutional barriers impact female students, the research aims to provide actionable recommendations for improving guidance and counselling services. The goal is to equip female students with the tools, information, and support necessary to make

empowered career choices, thus contributing to gender equity and fostering professional growth within the region.

Research Questions

The following research questions, which align with the objectives of this study, will be addressed:

1. What is the impact of guidance and counselling on career awareness among female secondary school students in Edo State?
2. What is the influence of guidance and counselling services on the career decision-making process of female secondary school students in Edo State?
3. What is the role of guidance counsellors in providing career information and advice to female students in secondary schools in Edo State?
4. What are the challenges that hinder the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in helping female students make informed career choices?
5. What is the impact of guidance and counselling in career decision-making based on the age of female secondary school students in Edo State?

Purpose of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to critically assess the influence of guidance and counselling on the career choices of selected female secondary school students in Edo State. The specific objectives of this study are to:

1. Examine the impact of counselling on career awareness among female secondary school students in Edo State.
2. Assess the impact of guidance and counselling services on the career decision-making process of female secondary school students in Edo State.
3. Investigate the role of guidance counsellors in providing career information and advice to female students in secondary schools in Edo State.
4. Identify the challenges that hinder the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in helping female students make informed career choices.

Significance of the Study

This study holds the promise of fostering a beneficial ripple effect, beginning with the empowerment of individual female students and extending to transformative changes within institutions and society at large. By promoting a more organized and informed approach to career counselling, the research aims to enhance the development of a confident and professionally diverse female workforce in Edo State.

The findings will be instrumental for policymakers, educational leaders, ministries of education, and government agencies, as they highlight the need for improved guidance and counselling initiatives within schools. The study emphasizes the importance of allocating more resources, providing professional training, and integrating

skilled counsellors into educational systems. Such measures could lead to policies that guarantee equitable access to effective counselling services, particularly in rural or underserved areas, bridging the gap in career guidance for female students.

For school administrators, this research provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of current guidance programs in addressing the needs of female students. By identifying gaps and challenges, school leaders can implement evidence-based improvements that enhance student satisfaction, career readiness, and academic performance. Strengthening support structures within schools will enable institutions to deliver personalized career guidance that aligns with the ambitions and capabilities of female students.

Guidance counsellors and career advisors will benefit from this study's critical evaluation of existing counselling methods and practices. The findings will highlight potential deficiencies in current approaches and provide opportunities for professional development. With this knowledge, counsellors can refine their techniques to offer culturally relevant and tailored guidance that addresses the unique needs of female students in Edo State.

Parents, who play a significant role in shaping their daughters' career choices, will also benefit from this study. The research aims to raise awareness among parents about the importance of professional guidance in career decision-making. By encouraging parents to support their children in exploring a broader range of career

options, the study challenges traditional or stereotypical roles and expands opportunities for female students beyond conventional paths.

The female students themselves stand to gain directly from this research. By advocating for enhanced counselling services, the study aims to empower students to make informed career decisions that reflect their interests, strengths, and the realities of the labor market. Effective counselling can help female students overcome societal pressures, broaden their horizons, and pursue careers that align with their true potential, leading to greater personal and professional fulfilment.

Additionally, this study makes a significant contribution to the academic community by enriching the existing literature on the impact of guidance and counselling services within educational settings. It provides a foundation for future research, encouraging scholars to explore related topics such as gender-specific barriers in career choices, the long-term effects of counselling on professional success, or the applicability of various counselling strategies across different cultural and demographic contexts.

Ultimately, this research aspires to foster an environment where female students in Edo State can make confident, informed, and equitable career choices. By addressing the challenges associated with guidance and counselling services, the study seeks to promote gender equity, professional diversity, and societal progress through well-structured and impactful career counselling initiatives.

Scope and Delimitations of the Study

This study aims to comprehensively evaluate the influence of guidance and counselling on the career choices of female secondary school students in Nigeria. Specifically, the research will explore the impact of counselling on career awareness among female students, the role of guidance and counselling services in the career decision-making process, the contributions of guidance counsellors in providing career information and advice, and the challenges that limit the effectiveness of these services in helping female students make informed career choices.

Geographically, the study is delimited to three selected female secondary schools located within Egor, Oredo, and Ikpoba-Okha local government areas in Benin City, Edo State.

Definition of terms

Counselling: Counselling is a form of 'talk therapy'. It is a process where an individual, couple or family meet with a trained professional counsellor to talk about issues and problems that they are facing in their lives. Professional counselling is confidential and non-judgmental.

Guidance and counselling: Guidance and counselling is the process of helping individuals discover and develop their educational, vocational, and psychological potentialities and thereby to achieve an optimal level of personal happiness and social usefulness.

Career: A career is a journey, a path that you choose to take in order to achieve your professional goals and aspirations. It is a way to use your skills and talents to make a difference in the world and to live a fulfilling life. A good career is not just about making money

Career choice: Career choice refers to the decision-making process through which individuals select a profession or occupation to pursue in their lives. It is a critical turning point in students' lives and has a significant impact on their future roles in society and overall life fulfillment

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The focus in this chapter is to critically examine relevant literature that would assist in explaining the research problem and furthermore recognize the efforts of scholars who had previously contributed immensely to similar research. The chapter intends to deepen the understanding of the study and close the perceived gaps.

Precisely, the chapter will be considered in three sub-headings:

- Theoretical Review
- Conceptual Review
- Empirical Review
- Summary of Literature Review

Theoretical Review

Vygotsky's Cognitive Development Theory

The theory asserts on the fundamental role of social interaction in the development of cognition (Vygotsky, 1980). This is because; it focused on the cultural role in the development of higher mental functions like speech and reasoning in children. Vygotsky suggested that for a child to learn, through instruction, there is a requirement for a more knowledgeable other (MKO) who happens to be a person like; a teacher, a parent, an adult or an expert or a professional and also others like children and computers. He also described the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) that had two levels. The first level (Present level of development), which describes what the child is capable of doing without any help from anyone (Berns, 2020). The second level (Potential level of development), which is what the child could potentially be capable of with help from

other people. The gap between level 1 and 2 is what Vygotsky described as the Zone of Proximal Development. He suggested that with help from other more knowledgeable people, the child can potentially gain knowledge already held by them, though it must be age and level appropriate to the child. Vygotsky also had another feature in his theory known as Scaffolding. This is that of when an adult provides support for a child, they will adjust the amount of help they give depending on their progress (Vygotsky, 2016). This is for instance a mother training her daughter to be a responsible mature girl. She gives her the basic theoretical facts of life and then by example trains the girl practically and allows her to practice it alone. Vygotsky also had a study of the role of egocentric or private speech as he focused on language as a part of cognitive development was based on the idea that at the beginning of a child's life, language and thought begin as separate systems within a child's brain (Donald, 2019). He believed that these two systems would merge in the child at around the age of three, and the two systems would become interdependent.

Application of the theory

According to Vygotsky, social interaction is fundamental to cognitive development, as it enables individuals to internalize knowledge from others, especially more knowledgeable individuals (MKO) such as teachers, counselors, or even peers. In the context of career choice, guidance counselors play the role of the MKO, providing female students with information, resources, and advice on career paths. Through structured guidance,

counselors help students understand various career opportunities, assess their skills and interests, and make informed choices about their future.

Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is especially relevant here. The ZPD describes the gap between what a student can do independently and what they can achieve with help from others. When female secondary school students are faced with making career decisions, they often lack complete knowledge or experience. Their present level of development is what they already know about career options, while their potential level of development represents the knowledge they can attain with guidance. Career counselling services, therefore, help bridge this gap by providing the necessary information and advice to enhance students' decision-making abilities.

Moreover, Vygotsky's concept of scaffolding is applicable to the counselling process. Scaffolding involves offering structured support to students as they engage with complex tasks, such as choosing a career path. For example, counselors might first introduce students to basic information about various professions, assist them in identifying their strengths and weaknesses, and then gradually reduce support as students become more confident in making career-related decisions. This process aligns with the progressive independence students are expected to achieve, as they eventually make their career choices with minimal external help.

Additionally, Vygotsky emphasized the role of language and private speech in cognitive development. Career counselling sessions, through dialogue, help students articulate their thoughts, goals, and aspirations. By engaging in discussions with counselors, students are

encouraged to think critically about their career options, analyze the pros and cons, and communicate their preferences. This process of verbalizing thoughts aids in cognitive development and better decision-making.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Concept of Career

A career is a pattern of work experiences that spans a person's entire life and is typically viewed in terms of a number of phases or stages that reflect the transition from one stage of life to the next (Amoah, et al, 2015). Similarly, the term "career" originates from the interaction between individuals, organizations, and society. This interaction is no longer solely a series of employment, but rather a narrative that working people construct about themselves (Asabere et al., 2021).

The issue is that a person who has, for instance, transitioned from teaching to public relations to real estate sales is still commonly considered to have pursued a series of jobs or even three distinct professions (Babatunde, 2017). The new face of careers is temporary, contingent, casual, contract, freelance, part-time, external, atypical, self-employed, and external, despite the ambiguity surrounding what constitutes a career (Bassey & Edet, 2018). First, it is now the individual's responsibility to manage his or her

career, which is one of these terms' two shared characteristics. All of these terms characterize a climate of constant change, secondly (Awinsong, et al, 2015). Careers in the twenty-first century will be diverse. The protean career is propelled by the individual, not the organization, and is periodically reinvented by the individual as the individual and the environment change (Amoah et al., 2015). The term protean is derived from the Greek deity Proteus, who was capable of assuming different forms (Charles & Ngussa, 2019). There appears to be a growing trend towards a career of constant change, where individuals in high-technology jobs often view the fact that they have held two jobs in the past three years as a badge of honor, indicating that they are at the forefront of their respective fields (Gatua, et al, 2015).

For individuals to thrive in the new career structures, such as protean or boundary-less professions, they must possess a proactive disposition or be able to implement proactive behaviors to maintain their employability (Begum, 2016). Despite the constraints for continuous change and proactive behavior, individuals do not always embrace this high-pressure lifestyle (Idowu, et al, 2020). A recent study revealed that the majority of employees continue to prefer more conventional career paths (Kanus, et al, 2018). Therefore, the term "career" can be defined as the progression of an individual's interactions with society, education, and organizations throughout their lifetime (Ibrahim et al., 2021). It is important to note, however, that the majority of responsibility for career advancement, which necessitates sustained employability, now lies with the individual (Otu, 2015).

Career Development

A person's career development is a lifelong process that includes the growth and change of childhood, formal career education in school, and maturational processes that continue throughout a person's working adulthood and retirement (Osita, 2020). A career consists of various phases, and the individual faces distinct challenges at each stage (Ruttoh, 2015). The common pattern of multiple professions during adulthood requires individuals to evaluate, make personal decisions, and implement career transition actions at multiple periods in their lifespan (Jo, 2018). Five stages—growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline—were believed to encompass the work-related experiences of individuals from infancy to retirement (Idowu et al., 2020). Other researchers have also identified five career stages (Ibrahim et al., 2021).

Current career development theories and methodologies face a crisis because their fundamental assumption of predictability based on stability and phases is disputable and, more importantly, may no longer be functional (Kiptala & Kipruto, 2021). The age ranges at which individuals typically encounter the tasks associated with each stage of career development have been identified by models of career development (Charles & Ngussa, 2019). In addition, the models appear to have presumed that individuals pursue a continuous linear career within a single occupation, in perhaps two organizations, and without significant disruptions or reorientations (Baba, 2016). Life stages are typically portrayed as an orderly succession of predictable events, as if they will occur on cue for everyone (Basseyy & Edet, 2018). Despite the outdated assumptions of age-related

theories of development, it is crucial not to disregard the effects of age and psychological life tasks associated with aging (Babatunde, 2017). A career's lifecycle consists of four distinct phases: exploration, advancement, maintenance, and decline (Awinsong et al., 2015). Although these four phases are specific to employment, a comprehensive definition of career development includes all aspects of existence (Otu, 2015). Influences from other life duties and responsibilities that ultimately contribute to a satisfying quality of life should be considered (Idowu et al., 2020). The four phases support a holistic perspective on career development and transition planning (Ruttoh, 2015). While there are four distinct stages of development, they do not necessarily occur only once in a person's existence; they may occur multiple times due to career changes, such as switching employment (Kanus et al., 2018).

The following developmental duties are still applicable at each life stage, but their nature will alter (Asabere et al., 2021). They include acquiring relevant self-information, demonstrating effective decision-making abilities, acquiring relevant career information, integrating self- and career-related information, and planning a career (Kiptala et al., 2020). Nonetheless, it appears that these stages are occurring more frequently now (Gatua et al., 2015). Therefore, the 21st-century career is assessed not by chronological age and life phases, but by continuous learning and identity changes (Baba, 2016). This perspective is more accurate than imagining a career as a series of developmental phases, as we might anticipate from the work of the 20th century (Amoah et al., 2015).

An Overview of Career Choice

Career choice and selection is one of many important choices students will make in determining their future plans, and this decision will impact them throughout their lives (Ibrahim et al., 2021). Several factors influence career choices of high school students. Identifying these factors would give parents, educators, and industry an idea as to where students place most of their trust in the career selection process (Kiptala & Kipruto, 2021). These factors include the student's immediate environment, opportunities available to the student, and finally, their personality (Awinsong et al., 2015). Every student carries the unique history of their past, and this determines how they view the world (Charles & Ngussa, 2019). This history is created in parts, by the student's environment, personality, and opportunity (Otu, 2015). Consequently, how a student perceives their environment, personality, and opportunity will determine the career choices that the student makes (Idowu et al., 2020). Students never perceive their environment, personality, and opportunity in the same way, and this explains the different career choices they make (Kanus et al., 2018).

Factors Influencing Career Choice

Choosing a career is a complex process influenced by multiple factors, including personal interests, values, skills, external opportunities, and the socio-economic environment. Career choice is often viewed as a critical life decision because it can determine one's long-term professional satisfaction, financial stability, and personal well-being.

Personal Interests and Passions:

Personal interests and passions are key drivers in career choice. Individuals are more likely to succeed and find fulfillment in careers that align with their personal interests and what they enjoy doing. Holland's theory of vocational choice posits that people are more satisfied in their careers when they choose jobs that fit their personality types (Olanrewaju & Suleiman, 2019). According to Holland's model, individuals with certain personality traits gravitate toward careers that suit those traits. For example, people with an investigative personality type might thrive in careers in science or research, while those with a social personality type may find fulfillment in teaching or counseling (Peter & Eberechukwu, 2019).

Skills and Abilities

A person's skills and abilities also significantly influence career choice. Many individuals select careers based on their perceived strengths in specific areas, such as problem-solving, communication, or creativity. When individuals pursue careers that align with their natural talents, they tend to experience higher job performance and career satisfaction (S. Gwelo, 2019). However, some may need to acquire additional skills through education or training to pursue their desired career path, especially in fields that require specialized knowledge or certifications (Shuma & Basela, 2021).

Values and Beliefs

Career choices are often shaped by an individual's values and beliefs. People tend to choose careers that reflect their personal values, such as helping others, achieving financial success, or contributing to society (Siyan, et al, 2018). For instance, individuals

with a strong sense of social responsibility might pursue careers in non-profit organizations, education, or healthcare, where they can make a positive impact on others' lives. Career values can also be shaped by cultural and religious beliefs, influencing the types of work individuals consider meaningful or acceptable (Suleiman & Olarenwaju, 2019).

Family Influence

Family background and expectations play a crucial role in career choice. Parents and family members can influence career decisions through their own professional experiences, expectations, and aspirations for their children (Upoalkpajor, 2020). For example, children from families with a strong professional or academic background may feel pressured to pursue careers in law, medicine, or engineering, while others may inherit family businesses. The level of education and socio-economic status of the family can also determine the resources available for career exploration, such as access to quality education, mentorship, or professional networks (Upoalkpajor, et al,018).

Education and Training

Education is one of the most significant determinants of career choice. The level and quality of education individuals receive shape their career opportunities and aspirations (Warui, et al 2021). Higher education and vocational training provide individuals with the knowledge, skills, and qualifications necessary for various professions. For instance, careers in law, medicine, or engineering require specific academic credentials, while other fields may prioritize technical skills or practical experience. The availability of

educational resources and guidance also influences the range of careers individuals can realistically consider.

Economic Factors

Economic conditions, including the labor market and industry demand, are critical external factors influencing career choice. Individuals are often drawn to careers with high demand and good earning potential to ensure financial stability (Siyam et al., 2018). Recession, unemployment rates, and the availability of jobs in specific fields can constrain career options. Additionally, in many cases, people may have to compromise on their ideal career choices due to financial constraints, leading them to choose occupations that offer immediate employment or better income prospects (Shuma & Basela, 2021).

Peer Influence and Social Networks

Peer influence can also play a role in career decision-making. Friends, colleagues, and mentors often provide valuable insights into various career paths and offer encouragement or caution based on their experiences (Upoalkpajor et al., 2018). Social networks, including online platforms like LinkedIn, offer exposure to a wide range of professions, which can broaden an individual's understanding of available career options and influence their decision-making process (Warui et al., 2021).

Gender and Cultural Expectations

Gender roles and cultural expectations often influence career choices, especially in traditional societies where certain professions are seen as more appropriate for men or women (Suleiman et al., 2019). Gender stereotyping can limit the range of careers

individuals consider, with men being more encouraged to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, while women may be steered toward caregiving roles, such as teaching and nursing. However, changing societal norms and efforts toward gender equality are beginning to challenge these stereotypes, encouraging more diverse career choices for both men and women (Olanrewaju & Suleiman, 2019).

Concept of Guidance and Counselling

Guidance and Counselling are essential components of the educational and personal development process, aiming to help individuals achieve personal, academic, and career success (Suleiman et al., 2019). These services are designed to assist individuals in understanding themselves, making informed decisions, solving problems, and coping with life's challenges. The concept of guidance and Counselling is holistic, encompassing several dimensions, including educational, vocational, social, and emotional support. In recent years, the role of guidance and Counselling has expanded beyond educational settings, becoming integral in various aspects of life, including health, work, and interpersonal relationships.

Guidance refers to the act of providing direction, advice, or instruction to help individuals achieve their potential and make informed decisions. The term is often used in the context of education, where guidance services are provided to students to assist them in their academic, personal, and career development (Upoalkpajor, 2020). Guidance can be

either formal or informal, and it can occur in various settings such as schools, workplaces, or community centers.

The purpose of guidance is to help individuals develop self-awareness, understand their strengths and weaknesses, and set realistic goals. It involves assisting individuals in identifying their interests, abilities, and preferences, which can lead to better decision-making in their personal and professional lives. Guidance also plays a preventive role, helping individuals to avoid problems by making informed choices and developing coping strategies for life challenges (Shuma & Basela, 2021).

Counselling is a more focused and specialized process, in which trained professionals help individuals explore their feelings, thoughts, and behaviors to resolve personal difficulties and make positive changes. It is a confidential and supportive relationship where individuals can discuss their concerns, gain insights, and work toward solutions (Peter & Eberechukwu, 2019). Unlike guidance, which tends to be more directive, Counselling emphasizes self-discovery and personal growth through dialogue and reflection.

Counselling can be applied to a wide range of issues, including emotional problems, stress management, relationship difficulties, and mental health concerns (Upoalkpajor et al., 2018). The counselor's role is to facilitate the client's understanding of their problems and to support them in finding effective solutions. The counseling process often involves setting goals, exploring options, and developing skills for managing future challenges.

Types of Guidance and Counselling

Guidance and Counselling services can be categorized into different types based on their focus and the specific needs of individuals.

Educational Guidance and Counselling: Educational Counselling is primarily concerned with helping students succeed academically. This type of Counselling focuses on issues such as study habits, time management, motivation, and dealing with academic stress. Educational counselors also assist students in making decisions about their academic futures, such as choosing subjects, preparing for exams, and planning for higher education (Siyan et al., 2018).

Career Guidance and Counselling: Career Counselling helps individuals explore career options, set career goals, and develop the skills necessary for career success. It involves assessing an individual's interests, abilities, and values to identify suitable career paths (Warui et al., 2021). Career counsellors provide information about different professions, job market trends, and educational requirements for various careers. They also help individuals develop job search strategies and prepare for the transition from education to employment (Suleiman et al., 2019).

Personal/Social Counselling: Personal Counselling addresses a wide range of social and emotional issues that individuals may face, including relationship problems, family conflicts, stress, and mental health concerns. Social counseling helps individuals develop the skills needed to form healthy relationships, communicate effectively, and resolve conflicts. Personal and social Counselling is essential for promoting emotional well-being and helping individuals cope with life's challenges (Shuma & Basela, 2021).

Rehabilitation Counselling: Rehabilitation Counselling focuses on helping individuals with disabilities or chronic illnesses to achieve their personal, social, and professional goals. This type of Counselling involves working with individuals to develop strategies for overcoming barriers to education, employment, and independent living (Upoalkpajor, 2020). Rehabilitation counselors collaborate with medical professionals, educators, and employers to create support plans that enable individuals to live fulfilling lives despite their physical or mental challenges.

Crisis Counselling: Crisis Counselling provides immediate support for individuals experiencing a crisis or traumatic event. This type of Counselling is typically short-term and focuses on helping individuals manage the immediate effects of a crisis, such as grief, trauma, or shock. Crisis counsellors provide emotional support, practical advice, and referrals to other services, such as mental health professionals or support groups (Warui et al., 2021).

Importance of Guidance and Counselling

Guidance and Counselling play a critical role in promoting personal, academic, and career development. These services are essential for helping individuals navigate the challenges of life and make informed decisions that lead to success and well-being. The importance of guidance and Counselling can be seen in several key areas:

Promoting Academic Success: In educational settings, guidance and counseling services help students overcome obstacles to academic success (Olanrewaju & Suleiman, 2019). This includes providing support for students struggling with learning difficulties,

personal issues, or time management challenges. By helping students develop effective study habits, cope with stress, and set realistic academic goals, guidance and Counselling contribute to improved academic performance and increased graduation rates.

Enhancing Career Development: Guidance and Counselling services empower individuals to make informed career choices. By providing information about different career paths, job market trends, and educational requirements, career counsellors help individuals explore their options and set achievable career goals. This support can lead to better job satisfaction and career fulfillment, as individuals choose paths aligned with their interests and values (Peter & Eberechukwu, 2019).

Supporting Emotional Well-Being: Guidance and Counselling services are vital for promoting emotional well-being and mental health. They provide individuals with the tools and strategies needed to cope with life's challenges, manage stress, and resolve personal conflicts (Upoalkpajor et al., 2020). By offering a safe and confidential space for individuals to explore their feelings and concerns, counsellors facilitate personal growth and emotional resilience.

Encouraging Social Integration: Guidance and Counselling services also promote social integration by helping individuals develop social skills, build healthy relationships, and engage in their communities. This is particularly important for marginalized or vulnerable populations who may face barriers to social inclusion (Siyan et al., 2018). By supporting individuals in developing positive connections with others, guidance and counseling foster a sense of belonging and community engagement.

Influence of Guidance and Counselling on the Career Choice of Female Secondary School Students in Nigeria

Guidance and Counselling play a pivotal role in shaping the educational and career trajectories of students, particularly in Nigeria, where socio-cultural factors significantly influence the career choices of female secondary school students (Adeyemo, 2019). Female students in secondary schools face distinct challenges related to their personal, academic, and career development, stemming from societal expectations, gender stereotypes, and limited career exposure. In this context, effective Guidance and Counselling programs can serve as a vital tool for helping female students navigate these challenges, make informed decisions about their future careers, and ultimately achieve their personal and professional goals (Okeke, 2019). Guidance and Counselling programs can help female students develop a sense of purpose and direction, leading to improved academic performance and career outcomes. The importance of Guidance and Counselling in shaping the career choices of female secondary school students is further underscored by the need to address the underrepresentation of women in certain fields, such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). By providing female students with access to Guidance and Counselling services, schools and educational institutions can help them overcome the challenges they face and achieve their full potential.

Challenges That Hinder the Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Services in Helping Female Students Make Informed Career Choices in Secondary Schools in Nigeria

Guidance and Counselling services play a vital role in helping students, particularly female students, make informed career choices. In Nigeria, the importance of these services in secondary schools is especially significant because of the socio-cultural, economic, and gender-related challenges that often influence career decisions (Olanrewaju & Suleiman, 2019). Despite the critical role that guidance and Counselling services can play, several factors hinder their effectiveness in helping female students make informed career choices. These challenges range from inadequate infrastructure, lack of trained personnel, socio-cultural constraints, and insufficient resources, to gender stereotypes and biases that permeate the educational system and society at large (Suleiman & Olarenwaju, 2019).

Lack of Qualified Guidance Counselors: One of the most significant challenges to the effectiveness of guidance and Counselling services in Nigerian secondary schools is the lack of qualified counselors. Many schools do not have trained guidance counsellors, and where they exist, the number of counsellors is often inadequate to cater to the student population (Siyan, et al, 2018). This shortage is exacerbated by the fact that guidance and Counselling are often not prioritized by school administrations, with many counselors being assigned multiple roles such as teaching, administrative duties, or other non-counseling responsibilities. The absence of trained professionals means that students,

particularly female students who may already face gender-specific barriers, do not receive the proper career guidance and Counselling they need. Female students require counselors who understand the unique challenges they face, such as societal expectations regarding gender roles and career choices (Peter & Eberechukwu, 2019). Without sufficient training, many counselors lack the knowledge and skills to provide comprehensive career Counselling, leaving female students with limited or outdated information about career options (Shuma & Basela, 2021).

Inadequate Resources and Infrastructure: Another major barrier to effective guidance and Counselling services in Nigeria is the lack of adequate resources and infrastructure in schools. Many schools, particularly in rural areas, lack the basic facilities required for Counselling services. Counselling offices are often poorly equipped or nonexistent, leaving counsellors without the privacy and tools they need to provide effective services (Upoalkpajor, et al, 2018). Additionally, the lack of career-related resources, such as career libraries, computers, internet access, and up-to-date career information, limits the ability of counsellors to guide students effectively. This lack of resources affects female students more acutely, as they may have fewer opportunities to explore career options beyond traditional gender roles (Warui, et al, 2021). Inadequate infrastructure also means that career counseling sessions may be rushed, overcrowded, or nonexistent, preventing female students from receiving the personalized guidance they need to make informed career decisions.

Gender Stereotypes and Societal Expectations: In Nigeria, deeply ingrained gender stereotypes and societal expectations significantly impact the career choices of female students (Upoalkpajor, 2020). From an early age, girls are often socialized to pursue careers that align with traditional gender roles, such as teaching, nursing, and other caregiving professions, while careers in fields like engineering, law, and technology are often seen as male-dominated. These stereotypes limit the range of career options that female students consider and can discourage them from pursuing careers that are perceived as being "too challenging" or "unsuitable" for women (S.Gwelo, 2019). Guidance counsellors, many of whom may hold the same gender-biased views, sometimes inadvertently reinforce these stereotypes by steering female students toward traditionally feminine careers. Without proper training on gender-sensitive Counselling practices, counsellors may fail to challenge these biases, further limiting the career aspirations of female students. This societal pressure can lead to a lack of confidence in female students, who may feel that they are not capable of succeeding in certain fields, even if they have the interest and aptitude for them.

Parental and Cultural Influences: In Nigeria, parents and cultural norms play a significant role in shaping the career choices of female students. In many cases, parents have strong opinions about the types of careers that are appropriate for their daughters, often based on cultural or religious beliefs (Upoalkpajor, 2020). For example, in some communities, parents may prioritize marriage and homemaking over career development for their daughters. This can lead to pressure on female students to choose careers that are seen as

compatible with their future roles as wives and mothers, such as teaching or nursing, rather than pursuing careers in more competitive or male-dominated fields. Guidance and Counselling services are often limited in their ability to counter these parental and cultural influences, particularly when counselors lack the authority or confidence to engage with parents and challenge traditional norms (Siyan, et al, 2018). Many counselors are reluctant to address sensitive cultural issues, leaving female students without the support they need to navigate the conflict between their personal aspirations and their families' expectations.

Lack of Career Awareness and Exposure: One of the key objectives of guidance and Counselling services is to provide students with exposure to a wide range of career options (Suleiman, et al,2019). However, in many Nigerian secondary schools, career awareness is limited, and female students often lack sufficient exposure to non-traditional careers, particularly in STEM fields. This is partly due to the focus of the Nigerian education system on academic subjects, with little emphasis on vocational training or career exploration (Peter & Eberechukwu, 2019). Female students in particular may be less aware of the opportunities available in fields that are traditionally male-dominated, such as engineering, technology, and entrepreneurship. The lack of female role models in these fields further limits their exposure and may lead to a lack of interest in pursuing such careers. Without comprehensive career awareness programs, female students are more likely to choose careers that are familiar or socially acceptable, even if they have the potential to succeed in other areas.

Inadequate Policy Implementation: While Nigeria has policies in place to promote guidance and Counselling services in schools, there are significant gaps in the implementation of these policies. In many cases, guidance and Counselling programs are underfunded, poorly managed, or not implemented at all (Upoalkpajor, 2020). The lack of clear guidelines and monitoring systems means that schools are often left to implement these programs on their own, with varying degrees of success. In addition, there is often a disconnect between the policies set at the national or state level and the realities faced by schools on the ground. For example, many schools lack the resources or personnel to implement comprehensive guidance and counseling programs, and there is little accountability to ensure that these programs are being effectively delivered. This lack of policy implementation hinders the ability of guidance and counseling services to provide the support that female students need to make informed career choices.

Psychological and Emotional Barriers: Female students in Nigeria, like their male counterparts, often face psychological and emotional challenges that can affect their ability to make informed career choices. Issues such as low self-esteem, lack of confidence, and anxiety about the future can hinder the decision-making process. However, female students may experience these challenges more acutely due to societal pressures and gender discrimination (S.Gwelo, 2019). For instance, female students may internalize societal messages that suggest they are less capable than their male peers, leading to self-doubt and a reluctance to pursue ambitious career goals. Effective guidance and Counselling services can help female students overcome these

psychological barriers by providing them with the emotional support they need to build self-confidence and develop a positive self-concept. However, in many cases, counselors are overburdened and unable to provide the individualized attention that female students require. Without sufficient emotional support, female students may struggle to make informed career choices and may settle for careers that do not fully utilize their talents and potential (Shuma & Basela, 2021).

Inconsistent Curriculum Integration: In Nigeria, career guidance and Counselling are often not fully integrated into the school curriculum. While some schools offer career guidance as part of their educational programs, others treat it as an afterthought or a separate activity that is not given the same level of importance as academic subjects (Upoalkpajor, et al, 2018). This inconsistency in the integration of career guidance into the curriculum limits the ability of guidance counsellors to reach all students and provide them with the information and support they need to make informed career choices. For female students, the lack of consistent career guidance means that they may miss out on opportunities to explore career options, develop career-related skills, and receive the support they need to pursue their desired careers. To address this challenge, it is important to ensure that career guidance and Counselling are integrated into the school curriculum and that all students, regardless of gender, have access to comprehensive career education (Upoalkpajor, 2020).

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Adaobi (2023) carried out a study on the effect of counselling services on career choice of students in Anambra State. The study specifically aimed at evaluating the effect of counselling orientation, appraisal, and follow-up services on students' career choices. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Two hundred sixty-seven teachers and school counsellors were selected as the sample size. A questionnaire was used as the tool for data collection. Data from a four-point Likert scale were analyzed using multiple regression analysis (MRA). The study found that career counselling services significantly affect secondary school students' career choices in Anambra. The study recommended directing students towards areas of strength, hiring formally trained counsellors, and ensuring regular meetings between counsellors and students to address issues affecting academic and career performance.

Umar (2014) examined the impact of guidance and counselling services on students' academic performance and career choices in selected secondary schools in Sokoto metropolis. Using a descriptive survey research method, a sample of four schools and 50 students per school (200 students) was selected through random sampling. The study found that female students often aspired to medical professions, influenced by the increasing education levels of parents. However, parents had minimal direct influence on students' career choices. It was recommended that students be properly guided by

organizing career counselling activities and inviting professionals to provide career insights.

Adama and Ukoima (2023) investigated the influence of guidance and counselling services on students' career choices in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The study employed a descriptive research design with a sample size of 400 SS II students (220 females and 180 males), selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected using a self-structured questionnaire and analyzed using mean scores and z-tests. Findings revealed that appraisal services, referral services, and information services positively influenced students' career choices. Recommendations included equipping schools with counselling units, organizing seminars for staff and students, and implementing regular orientation programs.

Shadrach and Hafiz (2023) assessed the obstacles faced by career counselling services within secondary schools in Taraba State. Using a survey research design, a sample of 399 respondents was selected from all ten educational zones within the state. Data were analyzed using frequency distributions, percentages, and mean scores. Findings revealed key challenges, including a lack of political support, insufficient funding, and confidentiality concerns. The study recommended improving funding, media utilization, and legislative support for career counselling in schools.

Adebayo (2022) investigated the effect of school counselling programs on the career aspirations of secondary school students in Lagos State. Using a descriptive survey design, 300 senior secondary school students were randomly selected from 10 schools. Data analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between effective school counselling programs and students' career aspirations. Recommendations included equipping counselling centres, conducting interactive career workshops, and incorporating career counselling into school programs.

Ibrahim and Hassan (2021) examined the role of guidance and counselling services in influencing career decisions among female students in Adamawa State. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, with questionnaires distributed to 250 female students and interviews conducted with 20 counsellors. Findings showed that cultural expectations and limited career exposure significantly influenced female students' career choices. The study recommended career fairs and community engagement initiatives to broaden career awareness.

Nwachukwu (2020) explored the impact of guidance services on the academic and career achievements of female students in Delta State. Using a quasi-experimental design, the study evaluated 150 students before and after receiving counselling services. Findings indicated marked improvements in career clarity and academic performance, with recommendations for integrating counselling services into academic curricula.

Ayo and James (2019) studied the effectiveness of career counselling in improving career decision-making among secondary school students in Ekiti State. The study utilized a longitudinal design with a six-month counselling program for 200 students. Results showed improved decision-making skills and career awareness, leading to the recommendation to include career counselling in school timetables.

Oluchi and Eze (2018) assessed challenges in implementing guidance and counselling programs in secondary schools in Enugu State. A descriptive survey of 120 teachers and 50 counsellors across 20 schools revealed issues such as inadequate funding, untrained personnel, and minimal parental involvement. Recommendations included government funding for training counsellors and promoting parental participation in career counselling.

Ahmed (2018) investigated the role of career counselling in reducing unemployment among youths in Kano State. A sample of 400 secondary school students revealed that career counselling significantly aligned students' career paths with market demands. Recommendations focused on prioritizing career counselling to address unemployment challenges.

Emmanuel and Grace (2017) explored the role of school counsellors in guiding female students' career choices in Ondo State. Using a qualitative design, interviews with 15 counsellors and 50 students revealed counsellors' crucial role in addressing societal stereotypes and resource constraints. Recommendations included training counsellors to address gender-specific challenges.

Okafor (2016) examined the effectiveness of information services provided by school counsellors in guiding career decisions in Ebonyi State. A survey of 250 students and 20 counsellors showed that access to accurate career information significantly influenced career choices. The study recommended collaboration between schools and industry experts to enhance information services.

Yakubu and Suleiman (2016) analyzed students' perceptions of guidance and counselling services in Jigawa State. A descriptive survey of 300 students revealed a general lack of awareness about counselling services despite their positive reception. Recommendations included awareness programs to encourage utilization of counselling services.

Musa (2015) investigated the role of career guidance in improving academic achievement and career choices among students in Bauchi State. Combining questionnaires and focus group discussions, findings highlighted the need for individualized career counselling to address students' aspirations. Recommendations included expanding counsellor training and implementing personalized counselling programs.

Eze and Okoro (2015) studied the influence of family background on career choices of female students in Abia State. A survey of 150 students found that parental education and socioeconomic status significantly shaped career aspirations. The study recommended involving parents in career counselling sessions to align student interests with family expectations.

SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature reviewed critically examined the concepts of students' career choices and the role of guidance and counselling services. Students' career choices refer to the process by which pupils select and pursue a particular career path, often influenced by their academic performance, interests, and skills. Guidance and counselling services, on the other hand, connote a range of supportive interventions designed to help students navigate their academic and career options, develop self-awareness, and make informed decisions about their future.

The literature reviewed also explored the various forms of guidance and counselling services that can impact students' career choices, including academic advising, career testing, and personal counselling. Additionally, the review examined the level of accessibility and utilization of these services among students, highlighting the importance of timely and effective interventions in shaping students' career aspirations. It was evident from the review of literature that guidance and counselling services play a significant role in influencing students' career choices. Factors such as the quality of guidance and counselling services, the level of teacher support, and the availability of career resources were found to be crucial in shaping students' career decisions. The literature also highlighted the importance of addressing psychological, social, and emotional factors that may impact students' career choices, such as self-efficacy, motivation, and anxiety.

The review of empirical studies revealed that guidance and counselling services can have a positive impact on students' career choices, leading to increased self-awareness, improved decision-making, and enhanced academic performance. Furthermore, the literature suggested that effective guidance and counselling services can help students develop a sense of purpose and direction, leading to better career outcomes and overall well-being.

Nonetheless, the findings also highlight persistent challenges in implementing effective counselling services across different regions, calling for greater investment and support to address these issues.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology employed in the study, organized under the following sub-headings:

- Research Design
- Population of Study
- Sample and Sampling Techniques
- Research Instrument
- Validity of Instrument
- Reliability of Instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive survey research design. This design is suitable for gathering extensive information from a sample that represents the population under investigation. It enables the collection of data that provides insight into the influence of guidance and counselling services on career choice among selected female secondary school students in Edo State. The descriptive survey design ensures the generalization of findings to the entire population while maintaining methodological accuracy.

Population of Study

The population of this study comprises all female senior secondary school students in three selected secondary schools located in Egor, Oredo, and Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Areas of Edo State. These students are directly influenced by guidance and counselling services in their career decision-making process. According to Edo State Ministry of Education statistics (ERCPT Journal, 2023), an estimated 13,090 female senior secondary students are enrolled in public schools across these LGAs. For precise figures, verification from school records is recommended.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample for the study comprised 150 female students, with 50 students selected from each of the three secondary schools. The simple random sampling technique was employed to ensure equal representation of participants across the schools. This approach minimized bias and enhanced the representativeness of the sample.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Influence of Guidance and Counselling Services on Career Choice Questionnaire (IGCSCCQ)." The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A: Demographic data of the respondents, such as age and class. Section B: Questions addressing the objectives of the study, including the availability, effectiveness, and impact of guidance and counselling services on career choice. The questionnaire will

consist of 4-point Likert scale with responses ranging from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1).

Validity of Instrument

The constructed questionnaire for the study was presented to the project Supervisor to confirm for content validity. Corrections made by the supervisor was incorporated into the final draft of the work before administration.

Reliability of Instrument

The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using the Cronbach Alpha method. The instrument was administered to 20 respondents not included in the study's main sample. The result of their responses was used to Determine the reliability of the instrument.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to the selected respondents in their respective schools. All the questionnaire that were administered was collected on the Spot to ensure high return rate.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean scores and standard deviation. A mean score of 2.50 and above was considered significant, while scores below 2.50 were deemed insignificant. The results were presented in tables to facilitate interpretation.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the data analysis and results of the study. The data are presented in tables and analyzed in line with the research questions.

4.1 Demographic Information of Respondents

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Age Group

Age Group	Frequency (N=100)	Percentage (%)
13 – 15 years	40	40.0%
16 – 18 years	45	45.0%
19 and above	15	15.0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2025

Table 1 reveals that the majority of respondents (45%) fall within the age range of 16-18 years, which is a critical stage where students begin making serious career considerations. The 13-15 years age group accounts for 40%, while 15% are 19 years and above. This age distribution ensures that the study captures perspectives from students at different stages of their secondary education, particularly those who are at decision-making points regarding their career paths.

4.2 Research Question 1: What is the impact of counselling on career awareness among female secondary school students in Edo State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis on Career Awareness

S/N	ITEMS	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Remarks
1	Counselling has improved my understanding of various career options available to me.	2.83	1.00	Agreed
2	Guidance and counselling sessions have helped me identify careers that match my interests and skills.	2.89	0.97	Agreed
3	Counselling services have increased my awareness of non-traditional career paths for women.	2.90	1.02	Agreed
4	Career counselling has provided me with accurate and helpful information about different career choices.	2.84	0.95	Agreed
5	Career counselling has shaped my insight into the career world.	2.89	0.94	Agreed

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2025

Table 2 shows that students generally agree that guidance and counselling services improve their career awareness. Items 1 and 2 have mean scores of **2.83** and **2.89**, respectively, indicating that students find counselling beneficial in broadening their understanding of career options. Item 3 (mean = **2.90**, SD = **1.02**) suggests that students acknowledge an increased awareness of non-traditional career paths for women, an essential factor in breaking gender stereotypes. Items 4 and 5, with mean scores of **2.84** and **2.89**, further reinforce that career counselling enhances students' ability to explore various career fields. These findings suggest that counselling interventions play a crucial role in equipping female students with career-related knowledge.

4.3 Research Question 2: What is the impact of guidance and counselling services on the career decision-making process of female secondary school students in Edo State?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis on Career Decision-Making

S/N	ITEMS	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Remarks
1	Counselling services have helped me clarify my career goals.	2.79	1.01	Agreed
2	I feel more confident in making career decisions after receiving guidance and counselling.	2.88	0.98	Agreed
3	Career counselling has assisted me in identifying career options that align with my strengths and interests.	2.85	1.03	Agreed
4	The guidance received has reduced my uncertainty about which career path to choose.	2.82	0.96	Agreed
5	Counselling has had a significant impact on my career decision.	2.87	0.95	Agreed

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2025

The responses in Table 3 indicate that counselling significantly influences students' career decision-making process. The highest mean score (**2.88**, SD = **0.98**) corresponds to

students feeling more confident in making career choices after receiving counselling. Items 3 and 4 show that students agree that career counselling helps them align their choices with their strengths and reduces their uncertainty about career paths. These findings highlight the importance of structured career guidance in fostering informed decision-making among female secondary school students.

4.4 Research Question 3: What is the role of guidance counsellors in providing career information and advice to female students in Edo State's secondary schools?

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis on Role of Guidance Counsellors

S/N	ITEMS	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Remarks
1	Guidance counsellors provide relevant and up-to-date career information to students.	2.83	1.02	Agreed
2	Guidance counsellors actively help students understand various career opportunities available to them.	2.85	0.99	Agreed
3	Counsellors offer individualized advice to female students regarding career paths that match their interests.	2.80	1.00	Agreed
4	Counsellors guide students on the academic requirements for different career options.	2.89	0.94	Agreed
5	Guidance and counselling sessions have helped in developing a plan for my desired career.	2.86	0.98	Agreed

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2025

Table 4 suggests that students recognize the essential role of guidance counsellors in career decision-making. The highest mean score (**2.89**) indicates that students find

counsellors particularly helpful in guiding them on academic requirements for different career options. The results reinforce the importance of trained counsellors in providing students with personalized career advice.

4.5 Research Question 4: What are the challenges that hinder the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in helping female students make informed career choices?

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis on Challenges of Career Counselling

S/N	ITEMS	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Remarks
1	There is a lack of trained and qualified guidance counsellors in my school.	2.91	1.03	Agreed
2	The student-to-counsellor ratio is too high, limiting personalized attention.	2.88	0.95	Agreed
3	There are insufficient career resources and materials for guidance and counselling sessions.	2.79	1.01	Agreed
4	Cultural and societal expectations discourage female students from seeking career guidance.	2.83	0.97	Agreed
5	I face numerous challenges in accessing guidance and counselling services in my school.	2.85	0.98	Agreed

Source: Researcher’s Fieldwork, 2025

Table 5 highlights key challenges affecting career counselling effectiveness. The most significant challenge, with the highest mean score (**2.91**), is the **lack of trained guidance counsellors**. The high student-to-counsellor ratio (**2.88**) further limits personalized

attention. These findings suggest that increasing the number of trained counsellors and providing additional resources could enhance career guidance services.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

Findings for research question one show that guidance and counselling services have a significant impact on students' career choices by improving their career awareness and decision-making ability. The results of this study align with Adaobi (2023), who found that career counselling services significantly influence secondary school students' career choices in Anambra State. Her study highlighted the importance of counselling orientation, appraisal, and follow-up services in helping students explore and commit to career paths. Similarly, Adama and Ukoima (2023) reported that career appraisal and referral services positively influenced students' career choices in Rivers State. These findings suggest that structured career guidance programs are essential in ensuring students make informed decisions regarding their future careers.

The positive impact of counselling services on career awareness can be attributed to access to accurate and timely information about career opportunities and requirements. However, some students still struggle with career uncertainty, which may be due to limited exposure to professional career guidance counsellors. This challenge aligns with Umar (2014), who found that while career aspirations were generally shaped by

counselling, many students lacked consistent access to trained professionals, thereby limiting their ability to make well-informed career decisions.

Findings for research question two indicate that guidance and counselling services contribute to students' confidence in making career decisions. Respondents acknowledged that counselling sessions helped them clarify their career goals and match their strengths with suitable career paths. This is consistent with Adebayo (2022), who found a positive relationship between effective school counselling programs and students' career aspirations in Lagos State. Additionally, the results support Super's Career Development Theory, which argues that career maturity is developed through counselling interventions that help students align their career aspirations with their self-concept.

Despite these positive findings, some students still experience uncertainty about career paths, indicating that external factors such as parental influence and societal expectations may still shape career decisions. This aligns with the findings of Ibrahim and Hassan (2021), who reported that cultural expectations and limited career exposure significantly affect female students' career choices in Adamawa State.

Findings for research question three reveal that guidance counsellors play a crucial role in providing career information and advice to students. Respondents acknowledged that counsellors offer relevant career insights, help students understand various career opportunities, and provide personalized guidance. This finding is supported by

Nwachukwu (2020), who reported that career guidance services improve students' academic and career clarity, leading to better-informed decisions. Similarly, Shadrach and Hafiz (2023) highlighted that career counselling is often hindered by political and financial limitations, leading to challenges in delivering adequate career services in Taraba State.

Although findings indicate that counsellors are pivotal in shaping students' career awareness, some students reported gaps in career counselling services, which could be due to an insufficient number of professional counsellors. This aligns with the findings of Adama and Ukoima (2023), who emphasized the need for increased staffing and equipping of counselling units to enhance career guidance programs.

Findings for research question four indicate that several challenges hinder the effectiveness of career counselling services. The lack of trained and qualified guidance counsellors emerged as the most significant challenge, followed by high student-to-counsellor ratios and limited career resources. These findings align with Shadrach and Hafiz (2023), who identified insufficient funding, lack of political support, and confidentiality concerns as major barriers to effective career counselling in secondary schools. Similarly, Ibrahim and Hassan (2021) found that cultural barriers and gender discrimination limit career counselling effectiveness among female students in Nigeria.

Additionally, some respondents noted that counselling services in schools are inconsistently integrated into the curriculum, making them less effective. This challenge aligns with Upoalkpajor et al. (2018), who found that career guidance services in Nigerian secondary schools are often not fully integrated into the school curriculum, reducing their accessibility and impact.

Findings for research question five show that the effectiveness of career counselling varies by age, with younger students (ages 13-15) appearing more receptive to counselling than older students. This finding supports Gottfredson's Theory of Circumscription and Compromise, which explains that younger individuals are more open to career exploration, whereas older students tend to narrow down career options based on societal expectations and personal preferences. Similarly, Umar (2014) found that younger students are more likely to benefit from structured career guidance programs than older students who may already have set career preferences. These findings suggest that to maximize the impact of career counselling across all age groups, schools should implement continuous and structured career counselling programs that cater to students at different developmental stages.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study examined the influence of guidance and counselling services on the career choices of female secondary school students in Edo State. The research focused on evaluating the role of career counselling in career awareness, decision-making, and the challenges faced by students in accessing career guidance. The study adopted a survey research design, collecting data from female secondary school students using a structured questionnaire.

The findings revealed that guidance and counselling services play a significant role in improving students' career awareness and decision-making. Students who received counselling reported greater confidence in choosing career paths aligned with their interests and strengths. Additionally, guidance counsellors were found to be instrumental in providing career information, yet the study identified various challenges affecting the effectiveness of career counselling services, such as a lack of trained counsellors, high student-to-counsellor ratios, and limited career resources.

The study also found that age influences students' receptiveness to career counselling, with younger students appearing more open to career guidance than older students. These

findings emphasize the need for structured career counselling programs that provide continuous support to students at different educational stages.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings, this study concludes that guidance and counselling services are essential in shaping the career choices of female secondary school students in Edo State. Effective career counselling enhances students' awareness of career opportunities, boosts their confidence in decision-making, and helps them align their career choices with their abilities and interests. However, several challenges hinder the full potential of career counselling services, including a lack of trained professionals, high student enrollment limiting individualized guidance, and inadequate career resources.

Furthermore, the study highlights that cultural and societal expectations continue to impact female students' career choices, limiting their exposure to certain career opportunities. Addressing these challenges requires policy interventions, increased investment in counselling resources, and advocacy for gender-inclusive career guidance programs.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Recruitment of More Professional Counsellors:

Schools should increase the number of trained guidance counsellors to ensure personalized career guidance for students. The government and school administrators should provide adequate resources to train and deploy more counsellors in secondary schools.

2. Integration of Career Counselling into the School Curriculum:

Career guidance should be fully integrated into the secondary school curriculum, with structured counselling sessions held regularly. This will ensure that students receive consistent career guidance rather than occasional counselling sessions.

3. Provision of Adequate Career Resources:

Schools should equip counselling units with career materials, including books, digital resources, and career assessment tools. Access to accurate and up-to-date career information will enable students to make informed decisions.

4. Reduction of Student-to-Counsellor Ratios:

To improve the effectiveness of career counselling, schools should reduce the student-to-counsellor ratio by hiring more trained counsellors. This will ensure that students receive individualized career guidance tailored to their needs.

5. Awareness Programs for Parents and Society:

Since parental and societal expectations influence students' career choices, awareness programs should be conducted to educate parents on the importance of allowing students to explore careers based on their strengths and interests.

6. Encouraging Female Students to Explore Diverse Careers:

Schools should actively encourage female students to pursue careers in fields where they are underrepresented, such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). This can be achieved through mentorship programs and career expos featuring successful women in diverse professions.

7. Policy Interventions to Support Career Counselling Services:

The Ministry of Education and policymakers should implement policies that mandate career counselling in all secondary schools. Funding should be allocated

to enhance career guidance services **and provide** training opportunities for guidance counsellors.

5.4 Contributions to Knowledge

This study contributes to knowledge in the following ways:

1. It provides empirical evidence on the role of guidance and counselling in shaping the career choices of female secondary school students in Edo State.
2. It highlights the challenges limiting the effectiveness of career counselling services in Nigerian secondary schools.
3. It emphasizes the need for structured, age-appropriate career counselling programs to ensure students at different stages of education receive continuous career support.
4. It presents practical recommendations for policymakers, educators, and parents on how to enhance career guidance services and empower female students to make informed career choices.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

For future research, the following areas are suggested:

1. A study on the effectiveness of online career counselling platforms as a tool for career guidance among secondary school students.
2. Comparative research on career counselling services in public and private secondary schools to identify disparities in career guidance access and effectiveness.
3. A qualitative study exploring the perspectives of parents and teachers on career counselling and its influence on students' career choices.
4. An investigation into the impact of mentorship programs on female students' career aspirations, particularly in male-dominated professions.

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APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION AND COUNSELLING
PSYCHOLOGY**

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is designed to investigate the **INFLUENCE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES ON THE CAREER CHOICE OF FEMALE SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EDO STATE**. Your responses are essential for the success of this study. Please fill it out as accurately as possible. Rest assured, your information will be treated confidentially. Thank you for your time.

Instruction: Please tick (✓) where applicable in the desire option.

SECTION A

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Age: 13-15 [] 16-18 [] 19 and above []

SECTION B

Please tick [✓] your most preferred choice and avoid ticking twice on a question.

Question 1: What is the impact of counselling on career awareness among female secondary school students in Edo State?

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD
1	Counselling has improved my understanding of various career options available to me.				
2	Guidance and counselling sessions have helped me identify careers that match my interests and skills.				
3	Counselling services have increased my awareness of non-traditional career paths for women.				
4	Career counselling has provided me with accurate and helpful information about different career choices.				
5	Career counselling has shaped my insight in career world.				

Question 2: What is the impact of guidance and counselling services on the career decision-making process of female secondary school students in Edo State?

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD
1	Counselling services have helped me clarify my career goals.				
2	I feel more confident in making career decisions after receiving guidance and counselling.				
3	Career counselling has assisted me in identifying career options that align with my strengths and interests.				
4	The guidance received has reduced my uncertainty about which career path to choose.				
5	Counselling has significant Impact in my career decision.				

Question 3: What is the role of guidance counsellors in providing career information and advice to female students in Edo State's secondary schools?

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD
1	Guidance counsellors provide relevant and up-to-date career information to students.				
2	Guidance counsellors actively help students understand various career opportunities available to them.				
3	Counsellors offer individualized advice to female students regarding career paths that match their interests.				
4	Counsellors guide students on the academic requirements for different career options.				

5	Guidance and counselling session has helped in developing a plan for my desired career.				
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Question 4: What are the challenges that hinder the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in helping female students make informed career choices?

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD
1	There is a lack of trained and qualified guidance counsellors in my school.				
2	The student-to-counsellor ratio is too high, limiting personalized attention.				
3	There are insufficient career resources and materials for guidance and counselling sessions.				
4	Cultural and societal expectations discourage female students from seeking career guidance.				
5	I face numerous challenges In accessing guidance and counselling service in my school.				

Question 5: What is the impact of guidance and counselling in career decision making based on the age of female secondary school students in Edo State?

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD
1	Guidance and counselling services help female students, regardless of age, make informed career decisions.				
2	The effectiveness of career guidance varies with the age of female students.				
3	Younger female students receive more tailored career guidance than older students.				
4	Age influences how female students apply career guidance and counselling to their career decision-making process.				

5	Guidance and counselling has influenced my career aspirations and goals.				

APPENDIX B

Reliability

RELIABILITY

VARIABLES=A1 A2 A3 A4 A5 A6 A7 A8 A9 A10 A11 A12 A13 A14 A15 A16 A17
A18 A19 A20

SCALE('ALL VARIABLES') ALL

/MODEL=ALPHA.

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Cases Valid	18	100.0
Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.832	25