

## EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE EDUCATION: VERITABLE TOOL FOR VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE IN NIGERIA

BY

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### **Abstract**

*The paper discussed early childhood care education as a veritable tool for vocational guidance in Nigeria. The general notion in the intellectual world believed that children of today are the leaders of tomorrow, which ofcourse; there have not been dispute upon. As such, the foundation of education; either formal or non-formal given to them has a lifelong impact or their activities late in life. Hence, it is necessary to put everything possible within the conventional frame work for teachers and students to explore and exploit their intellectual ability toward a successful service delivery. Any knowledge or skills acquired at the tender age are veritable tools for self-reliance in the future reducing their dependence or white color job. To this end, the paper attempted to examine the concept of vocational guidance through the early childhood care education. The paper ends with a recommendation that, for a successful vocational guidance to be achieved, government should encourage the establishment of vocational guidance unit in all levels of our educational system as this would assist in no small measure to strengthen career guidance on the children*

**Keywords:** *Early childhood care education, Vocational education, Vocational guidance*

### **Introduction**

Education is as old as the human sciences. It is the basis for every human positive discovery which enables man to contribute and function effectively in the society. Osakoye (2014) define education as the continue process which the society establishes to assist its member to understand the heritage of the past and to participate productively in the future. Osokaya (2014) stressed further that it is the leading out of the in born powers and potentialities of the individual in the society and the acquisition of skills, aptitudes and competencies necessary for self-realization and for coping with life's problem. However, early childhood care education is the education a child received before transition to primary school. It encompasses all the care in the domains of the child development, which includes health, good nutrition, shelter, conducive environment for the child to survival positively. To Ojameruanye (2014), early childhood care and education is the children's care development and education from birth to the period of exposure to primary schooling experience in the formal and informal setting.

The care in this context is given from birth and the aspect of education takes off from around age two, when cognition begins to manifest, i.e. ability to acquire knowledge, the mental faculty or process of acquiring knowledge through reasoning, institution or perception for a child to acquire functional knowledge or training in other aspect of educational system. Therefore, a child must be exposed to proper and adequate vocational guidance, so that, there would not be a misplacement in the choice of career for the child to function and contribute meaningfully to the society from childhood through the adulthood. Hence, vocational guidance is relating to career choice, career aspiration and career development of an

individual. It is good to be guided through a choice in the area of vocation to reduce the child's dependence on white collar jobs. To this end, if children are properly guided in terms of career choice, they will become good educator, good planners of developmental strides and in other facets of social economic and political development. Hence, the paper focused on early childhood care education as a veritable tool for vocational guidance in Nigeria.

### **Early Childhood Care Education**

Early childhood care education is the fundamental care and education given to a child through intellectual, physical, social growth, and development. This involves health care, nutrition, shelter before their transit into primary school. It determines to a large extent how a child care survives all stages of development to the time of puberty. However, Oduolow (2011) believed that, the period of birth to toddlerhood (birth to 24 months) and play years (2 to 6 years) is a crucial stage to human development. Defining early childhood care education, Oluwadare (2015) said, it involves the child's physical, cognitive, language, emotional, social and moral development. Oluwadare (2015) stressed further that, the age spans under consideration in early childhood care education is from conception to about 6 years. Modest development process required during this period includes care of the mother during pregnancy (anti-natal, health checkup, nutritional supports, concepts of anemia, immunization, for prevention of tetanus following delivery), hygienic and skilled birth attendance, and nutritional care of mother during location, infant feeding practices, immunization of the infants from communicable disease, childhood stimulation health and nutritional support throughout the toddler lifespan.

Consequently, early childhood care education in Nigeria has, therefore, metamorphosed from a single sartorial approach to a multi sartorial pursuit, converging interventions in health, nutrition, care, stimulations and participation of all stakeholders in the sustenance and the development of the child from the preschool years. Therefore, this also seeks improved participation of government in policy analysis and implementation (IECD 2007). The National Commission for Collages of Education (2012) stated that the early years of a child (0 -5) are crucial for the development of an individual and any support given at this stage helps to promote development. This period requires teachers and caregivers who are knowledgeable, skilled and equipped for the task to impact the child, hence the need to train them along early childhood care education principles and methods, so as to enable them handle children effectively. Caregivers and teachers of young children should also possess such qualities as enthusiasm, kindness gentleness and tolerance. To this end it is important to note that early childhood care education is the sum total of child's physical and cognitive development strides. The education and care giver at this stage shall continue to have a lifelong positive or negative effect or the child's growth and development.

### **Vocational Education**

Vocational Education is the training or skills acquired in a practical form, either in an informal or formal setting, that enables an individual function efficiently and effectively to contribute to the social economic strides of the society and the country at large. It assists the society to grow efficiently as it competes with other developed societies. Ogundele and Feyistan (2014) believed that vocational education includes education and training programme designed for and typically leading to a particular jobs or type of jobs, which comprises of programmes mainly designed for and used by young people (those under 30) at the beginning of their careers, and commonly before entering the labour market. By and large, it includes continuing enterprise training of employees and retraining provision for the unemployed.

To Clark and Olumese (2013), vocational education is a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving addition to general education, the study acquisition of practical skills attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation in various sectors of economic and social life. Adekoya and Ayamoole (2012), defined vocational or technical training or retraining as that which is given in schools or classes under public supervision and control or under contract with a state board or local education agency. It is conducted as part of a program designed to prepare individual for gainful

employment as semi- skilled or skilled workers or technician, or sub professional in recognized occupation or to prepare individual for enrolment in advance technical education: Adekoya and Ayanwale (2019) stressed further that, technical and vocational education referred to those aspects of study of technologies and related science and acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation in various sectors of the economic and social life. Hence, an individual who acquired a special skill or undergo a special training and retraining through vocational education can be self-sufficient and contribute to the economic growth and development of the society.

### **The Need for Sustainable Vocational Education**

In each society, people hoped to have a sustainable and formidable source of livelihood that will enable them survive among their peers, as they take positive financial obligations in their family and the society at large. Adekoya and Ayanwale (2012), believed that prior to the onset of formal education in Nigeria, such knowledge and skills were acquired, through a traditional system, whose curriculum was comprehensive and provided for intellectual development, as well as learning skills to prepare for a chosen vocation. Therefore, the content of Nigeria's traditional education as outlined by Adekoya and Ayamele (2012) includes:

- a. Education for living in conformity with the tradition of the community.
- b. Education for occupations and economic self-reliance and
- c. Education for special occupation.

It is important to note that, the Nigeria pre-formal school education provided learners with saleable skills which enable them to function effectively and efficiently in the world of work. Hence, such educational delivery system ranged from a continuous:

**Family Heritage:** A system whereby a father or mother passes on to their children the occupational skills which they themselves has acquired from their parent, plus whatever they themselves have learnt accidentally or trial and errors.

**On-the Job Training (OJT):** where instructor could be more than one, and learners are not necessarily the offspring of the instructors. This system enables even the orphan in the societies to learn some skills for work and sustenance.

**The Apprenticeship System:** this is an expansion of the OJT approach. Here, training is done for a fee agreed upon by the parties involved. This system of meeting society's need for works is skills practiced.

### **Vocational Guidance**

Every young man requires advice as to what kind of work will be most suitable for him keeping in view his abilities and aptitudes. When such an advice is given, it is known as vocational guidance. Vocational guidance is a facilitative process, a service rendered to the individual to aid in choosing and adjusting to an occupation. Hence vocational guidance in early childhood care education is the career sensitization and guidance given to a child to choose the training that will enhance a lifelong positive impact on individual, which will reduce their drench dependence, and assist them contribute meaningful to the societal growth and development. Akande (2014) explained that, vocational guidance relates to career choice, counselor or aspiration and career development. It is any assistance given by the parent, counsel or career master to another person as it enhances and outlines own resource. Vocational guidance promotes environment opportunities in the process of understanding, planning and decision making, coping with problems related to individual's development needs as well as educational and vocational activities (Akande 2014). Chauhan (2014) saw vocational guidance as a process of assisting for it, enter upon and process in it. It is concerned primarily with helping individuals make decisions and choices involved in building a future career, decisions and choices necessary for effective and satisfactory vocational adjustments.

### **The Need for Vocational Guidance**

The importance of vocational guidance in the life of the children as they grow through adulthood cannot be over emphasized. As the society is moving forward, technology is already taking the lead in all facets

of human development, hence, there is the need to guide children from their young ages to enable them compete favorably among their peers. Some of the importance of vocational guidance as outlined by Chauhan (2014) includes:

- a. assisting individuals to acquire such knowledge within which his choice will probably lie as he may need for making an intelligent choice
- b. assisting individual to find general and specific abilities and skills required for the group of occupations under consideration in terms of qualifications, age, sex and preparation.
- c. providing opportunities for experiences in school and out of school which will give such information about condition of work as will assist the individual to discover and develop his interest in own abilities.
- d. assisting individual to acquire the techniques of analysis of occupational information and development the habit of analyzing such information before making a final choice.
- e. assisting individual to secure such information about himself, his abilities, general and specific, his interests and his powers as he may need for a wise choice.
- f. economically assisting handicapped children or adolescent to pursue their occupational career.
- g. assisting individual to secure knowledge of the facilities offered by various educational institutions for vocational training
- h. assisting individual to adjust into an existing realities of the occupation of choice.
- i. assisting individual to secure reliable information about the danger of alluring short cuts to fortune through short training courses and selling propositions and of such unscientific methods

Essentially therefore, with a well guided career, the children can always be the engine room of the economic sphere in their lifelong journey. This will no doubt assist them to make life meaningful and worthy living as long as they can provide for their livelihood without depending unnecessarily on others livelihood.

### Conclusion

From the forgoing, a child who had the opportunity of a good tutelage from a trained counselor shall always have objective decision making in career choice and by extension, when making vocational choices. Hence, the critical stage of the child's growth and development is between 0 - 8 while any mistake during this period has a lifelong negative effect on the child. Therefore, it is important to educate individuals and guide them in their various career choices. Also, making available to them all that is possible within conventional framework would enable them strive globally.

### Recommendations

It is against this background of the above statement that early childhood care education is a veritable tool for vocational guidance in Nigeria:

1. Government should encourage vocational guidance in all levels of educational system to enable children be acquitted with career choices in the future, particularly in the area they might wish to be trained.
2. Adequate fund should be made available by the government to enhance training and retraining of the guidance counselors
3. Government should ensure good curriculum to be in place to assist the guidance counselor to know how to handle the children efficiently and effectively.
4. Government should put in place good security network that would enhance effective sensitization of the counselor and the counsels.
5. Parents should seek for advice from a trained and quality career counselor before channeling the mind of their children towards a particular vocational training for good and proper service delivery.

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