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## **Influence of Vocational Guidance on Choice of Agricultural Education as Career for Students in Tertiary Institutions, Rivers State.**

*Dr. Nlebem S. B.*

**Department of Vocational and Technology Education, Faculty of Education, Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port-Harcourt.**

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### **Abstract**

The study investigated “influence of vocational guidance on choice of agricultural education as a career for students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State”. Four (4) research questions guided the study. The research design adopted was descriptive research survey design. The population consist of two hundred and seventy (270) respondents; 170 students and 100 graduates of agricultural education. The sampling technique adopted was census because the entire population was used for the study because of its manageable size. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire, the instrument was validated by two experts in the department of Vocational and Technology Education. A reliability coefficient of 0.88 was established using test-retest method. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions. The findings revealed that career choice of agricultural education students is influenced by culture, socio-economic factors, belief of the peer group, life style of the peer group, parents desire their children to inherit their occupation among others. The study further recommended that (1) students should make career choices putting into considerations the students areas of passion, strength and weaknesses, and the societal need of such trades or courses, (2) Government should endeavour to make educational programmes attractive by implementing educational Policies and improving the standard of VTE workshops with modern tools and equipment, (3) Government should re-establish and reintegrate industrial training (IT), opportunities in such a way that students who are posted to industries and organization do so in reflection of their areas of specializations, (4) VTE teachers/lectures should be updated with subsequent training and retraining on new VTE instructions and developments,

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**Keywords:** Influence, Vocational guidance, Agricultural education, Career, Tertiary institutions.

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### **Introduction**

Technology education is an aspect of education which leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge according to United Nation Educational Scientific and Culture Organization (UNESCO, 2001), Technology education is a comprehensive term referring to that process involving in addition to general education, the study of technological and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation in various sectors of economic and social life. Tertiary institutions are designed to prepare individuals to acquire practical skills, basic scientific knowledge and attitudes required as craftsmen and technicians at sub professional level. However, it requires an academically oriented intellect for success as the curriculum for tertiary education must be well grounded in the sciences which requires a relatively more complex cognitive and psychomotor development for mastery.

Vocational guidance is designed to guide students choose careers which will not be regrettable in the course of their study, perhaps, prepare them for a suitable vocation which will bring them career satisfaction and enable them secure gainful employment after graduation. Vocational Guidance, according to Ogbodo, (2013) is the process of assisting people to choose a vocation, prepare for efficiency and succeed in it. Also, the United State of America National Vocational Guidance Association (USANVGA) (2018) defined “Vocational Guidance as the experience and advice in regard to choosing an occupation, preparing for it, entering into it and progressing in it”. Hence, the ultimate goal of vocational guidance was to make sure those immigrants or the poor who enter the urban area were not delayed in getting a job. This matching approach entails establishing the relationship between ones attitudes, abilities, interests, resources, ambitions, limitations, weakness and their causes) and conditions of successes, advantages, compensations, opportunities and prospects in different lines of work. Adoga (2020) opined that vocational guidance is, thus, the profession that aims at not only providing adequate and appropriate information to students towards taking visionary decision about a vocation, but also understanding themselves and the socio-economic environment. This way, students will be performing, adjust progress and experience a sense of fulfilment and a sense of accomplishment for the benefit of humanity. Nlebem (2018) defined vocational guidance as assistance given to a person in solving problems related to occupational choice and grow with regard for the persons interest and abilities and their relation to occupational opportunities.

An important feature of vocational guidance which is also known as career guidance practice is the fact that it incorporates all the different aspects of counselling and guidance including the group approach, the information-giving services, the interaction between counsellor and client, evaluation and appraisal function, that is, career guidance is very much like other types of guidance and this is why it is being described as a unified approach and as integrated efforts in what have otherwise traditionally been termed educational and vocational counselling (Belkin, 2004). The term Educational and Vocational Guidance which is currently being subsumed under vocational guidance is used to describe specialized types of counselling applications designed to provide information and psychological assistance which may directly affect the decision and choice the student is about to make with respect

to schooling, immediate employment and future job directions. To further emphasize the multi-disciplinary nature of vocational guidance and in particular and in an effort to make it more applicable to the school setting, (where most vocational guidance actually take place), Shertzer and Stone (2014) described Educational and Vocational Guidance as continuous help given to students/clients in school and outside school to enable them understand themselves better, know their strength and limitations so that they may progress successfully, respond to the new demands and use their capabilities to the fullest potential in their world of work. Thus, vocational career guidance involves adequate and appropriate knowledge of oneself including insight into one's interests, abilities, aptitudes, values and all within the framework of work. This nature of vocational guidance makes it inseparable from other types of Guidance (Educational and Personal).

Achebe (2002), for instance, noted that educational guidance help students to choose their subjects and adjust to school life. Belkin (2004) noted that it is usually not possible to help someone with a vocational problem without recognizing such other aspects of his life as students, conflicts and relations with others genuine vocational guidance does not only involve educational guidance but also personal motivations and values as well as behaviour disposition. No doubt, long standing personal problems will militate against high educational achievement which in turn will determine the range of occupations before an individual may enter into the proposed vocational /career choice (Jackson & Jumpers, 2001).

The influence of career choice has a lasting impact on an individual. It serves to be a predictor and determinant of their prospective level of income, nature of work and consequently leaves a mark on the personality, demeanour and outlook of an individual, thus, one wrong decision can change the fate of an individual. It is difficult for everyone to make a decision regarding their career; this individual action is manifested on a larger scale in the economic prosperity of a nation. Individuals who are misfits in their workplace tend to be less productive and inefficient, and therefore are unable to achieve their goals. The concept has been explained by Jones & Larke, (2005), who defines occupation as a means of living, which has the power to change personalities, determine social status, predict expected earnings, determine social groups' etc. Thus, its importance cannot be undermined. Given its complexity, it is then a point to ponder upon as to how career decisions are made. These are elucidated by Alemu, (2013) who elaborates the importance of dialogue with peers, sessions with institutions counsellors, and discussions with parents and teachers on career selection as "career convention" or "career conference".

According to him "career convention is an instrument of career information", and entails the following: the create awareness regarding areas of interest and prospective career fields; To help in short listing preferable jobs; To provide opportunities in which parents, employees and career counsellors can exchange views. A crucial influence in decision making regarding career is the home environment according James, (2000) as it lays the foundation of a child's personality. Issa and Nwalo (2008) asserted that many youths in Nigeria go into unsuitable careers due to ignorance, inexperience, peer pressure, advice from friends, parents and teachers or as a result of the value attached to certain jobs without adequate guidance and career counselling. Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa (2006) reported that parents have significant influence on their children career decisions, this influences their productive output. In addition, it has been observed that some students are pushed into some careers due to job related decisions. For instance, some students choose education courses because of the job opportunities in the field. Others find themselves in a course due to school administrative policies. Hence, the need for tertiary institutions/technical college students to be Counsellor and guided before embarking on a career choice cannot be over emphasized.

Vocational education in tertiary institutions are established with the aims of training and producing technologists for industry; in connection, Adegbile (2002) in his view noted that tertiary institutions are designed to provide training for individuals to acquire the awareness and skills necessary for mastering a trade/handicraft. Making choice of academic programme in tertiary institution has been seen by most students as a complex decision-making requirement, as the career they intend to pursue in life depends on it. Adetola and Popoola (2021) opined that choosing an appropriate career course has become an important decision to make by the youth of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The career choice determining the future plans as it impact their lives positively. However, most students lack adequate occupational information before they enter into occupations. In some cases, the students concern themselves with reading up courses in the schools without due regard to the marketability and employability of the graduates in the field. Career choice is not one that is made abruptly. It is a continuous process and a series of job that a person has in a particular area of work, usually involving more responsibilities as time passes (Okonwo, 2011).

Nlebem (2018) defined agricultural education as a process of imparting knowledge, skills and attitude in agriculture to the learners at any level, at primary level is called rural science, secondary level agricultural science and tertiary level agricultural education. Obibuaku (2004) described it as education and training given in agriculture from primary school through secondary and special schools to the University. Agricultural education is therefore an important school programme that is offered at all levels of education ranging from home to the school and the community implying that it can be formal, informal and non-formal. Agricultural education provides learners with sound academic knowledge and skill as well as ample opportunity to apply this knowledge through classroom activities, laboratory experiments, projects participation and supervised agricultural experiences. It emphasizes skills development in all aspects of agribusiness such as planning; management; safety, finances, and leadership, it also furnishes learners with the necessary communication and interpersonal skills as well as knowledge of technical agriculture to would be teachers at all levels. It equips learners to be self-employed or work in agricultural extension services, foreign services in business or industry and as agricultural educators.

Agricultural education students who are studying at the higher level of education are supposed to be informed consciously about the needs of embarking on such career part in order to enable them become pioneers of their chosen trade. However, students who opt to study agricultural related courses supposed to be more familiar with courses related to farming, thereby enhancing the changes of being enlisted to study in vocational and tertiary education course, this unfortunately is due to the negative perception bearing on VTE in Nigeria. Ewoh (2021) reassured that VTE is now assumed as a second choice option for the concerned society and most prospective university students. Thus, the future of any society is determined by the skilful younger generation; therefore, making the right career choices should enable them acquire knowledge, skills and attitude required for their future lives as they explore and evaluate a wide range of career options to attain goals in the future (Adetola & Popoola, 2021). Hitherto, factors influencing agricultural education students in vocational and technical education at tertiary level of education as assumed in this study are: influence of environment, parents or guardians, employment, career information, student's personality and peer group. According to Alutu (2001), career development and choice should be

initiated as early as the nursery school years through the primary, secondary and to the tertiary school level, unfortunately it seems making appropriate career choice has become an uphill task among the concerned students in Rivers State. It is against this background that this research work is proposed to investigate the impact of vocational guidance on career choice of agricultural education students in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State.

The establishment of Tertiary Institutions was conceived to be the needed tool for technological advancement in Nigeria. However, observation indicates that they are operating and graduating agricultural education students below the conceived expectation, overwhelmed with problems. The problems are often multifaceted and could be traceable to numerous factors such as ignorance of student, parental pressure on their wards to choose certain career, peer pressure, mass failure in examination and non-availability of professional vocational guidance services amongst other. Consequently, the rate of school drop outs and unemployment became increasingly high as a result of ineptitude.

These unskilled and incompetent agricultural education graduates of tertiary institutions cannot cope with the high technological manpower specification required in the world of works, thus, resulting in shortage of specialized tertiary manpower. The much need of technological development may therefore be a mirage if the current trend continues. What is not yet certain is whether agricultural education students are guided by a guidance counsellor in making appropriate career choice that would lead to the acquisition of the needed technological skills and competences prior to graduation. In the light of the above, the study sought to analyse the influence of vocational guidance on career choice to prompt skilled manpower development amongst agricultural education students of tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

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### Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate “influence of vocational guidance on choice of agricultural education as career for students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State”. Specifically the study sought to:

1. Determine the influence of environment on career choice of agricultural education students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.
2. Determine the influence of parents on career choice of agricultural education students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.
3. Determine the influence of employment opportunities on career choice of agricultural education students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.
4. Determine the influence of peer group on career choice of agricultural education students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

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### Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the influences of environment on the choice of agricultural education as a career for students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?
2. What are the parental influences on the choice of agricultural education as a career for students' in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?
3. What are the employment opportunities influences on choice of agricultural education as a career for students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?
4. What are the peer group influences on choice of agricultural education as a career for students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

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### Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, the study was carried out in Rivers State, Nigeria; this is due to the presence of tertiary institutions offering agricultural education and the availability of agricultural education students evident in the selected institution thus, necessitated the reason for carrying out the study in Rivers State, Nigeria. The population consisted of (270) made up of 170 students and 100 graduates of agricultural education from the departments of Vocational and Technology Education (VTEs) in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The tertiary institutions considered for the study consist of two (2) Universities and one (1) College of Education, these comprised; Rivers State University (RSU) (50) = ((20) graduates and (30) students), Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) (60) = (30 graduates and = 30 students), Federal College of Education Technical FCE (T) Omoku (160), = (50 graduates and 110 students). Census sampling technique was adopted to select all the 270 respondents because of its manageable size. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire titled; “Influence of Vocational Guidance on Career Choice of Agricultural Education Students Questionnaire” (IVGCCAESQ), which was designed in the pattern of 4-point Likert scale of agreement. Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), with assigned numerical values of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The instrument contains 22 items drawn from the research questions. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistical mean and standard deviation to answers the four (4) research questions.

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### Results and Discussion

**Research Question 1:** What are the influences of environment on students' choice of agricultural education as a career in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

**Table 1: Respondents Mean Responses on the Influence of Environment on Students Choice of Agricultural Education as a Career in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State.**

S/N	Statement	Students (n=170)			Graduates (n=100)		
		X	SD	REMARKK	X	SD	REMARK
1.	Low societal value of VTE	3.03	0.30	Agree	3.05	0.39	Agree
2.	Influence of culture	2.71	0.30	Agree	3.15	0.32	Agree
3.	Socio-economic factors	3.18	0.28	Agree	2.75	0.33	Agree
4.	Religion of the people	2.74	0.27	Agree	2.66	0.51	Agree
5.	Poor state of learning environment	3.15	0.24	Agree	3.15	0.55	Agree
6.	People perception of career	2.87	0.26	Agree	3.15	0.55	Agree
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	2.78	0.26	Agree	3.04	0.41	Agree

Source: (Field Survey, 2022).

The findings in Table 1 showed that the respondents agreed that the environment influences the choice of agricultural education as a career for students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State: The Table indicated that, low societal value of vocational technical education (3.03 & 3.05), influence of culture (2.71 & 3.15), socio-economic factors (3.18 & 2.75), religion of the people (2.74 & 2.66), poor state of learning environment (3.15 & 3.15), people perception of career (2.87 & 3.15). Furthermore, result revealed that the standard deviation ranging from 0.24 – 0.30 for students while 0.32 – 0.55 for graduates these indicated closeness in the opinion of the respondents. These findings are in line with Ogbodo (2013) who posited that environment play a strong role on the choice of career of students in tertiary institutions. Also, the findings are in agreement with that of James (2000) who stated that the environment is one of the factors that influences students' choice of career in tertiary institutions.

**Research Question 2:** What are the parental influences on students' choice of agricultural education as a career in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

**Table 2: Respondents Mean Responses on Parental Influences on Students' Choice of Agricultural Education as a Career in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State;**

S/N	Statement	Students (n=170)			Graduates (n=100)		
		X	SD	REMARK	X	SD	REMARK
1.	Parents desire their children to inherit their (parents) vocations	3.10	0.61	Agree	2.81	0.37	Agree
2.	Parents assist children perform well in parents vocations	3.01	0.35	Agree	2.95	0.26	Agree
3.	Parent career choice recommendation is considered parents dreams	2.85	0.26	Agree	3.01	0.23	Agree
4.	Parents career choice for children is based on salary of the occupation	3.12	0.33	Agree	3.10	0.62	Agree
5.	Parents career choice for children is based on past experiences	2.90	0.28	Agree	3.10	0.36	Agree
6.	Parents career choice for children is based on family passion	2.80	0.25	Agree	2.61	0.35	Agree
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	2.95	0.40	Agree	2.83	0.32	Agree

Source: (Field Survey, 2022).

Data in Table 2 showed that the respondents agreed that parental influence affect the choice of agricultural education as a career for students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Parents desire their children to inherit their vocations (3.10 & 2.81), parents make their children perform well with parents vocations (3.01 & 2.95), parents career choice recommendation for their children is considered parents dreams (2.85 & 3.01), parents career choice for their children is based on salary of the occupation (3.12 & 3.10), parents career choice for their children is based on past experience (2.90 & 3.10), parents career choice for their children is based on family passion (2.80 & 2.61). Furthermore result revealed that the standard deviation of the students ranging from 0.25 – 0.35 while 0.32 – 0.62 for graduates. These indicated closeness in the opinion of the respondents. The findings are in agreement with the Popoola (2001), in his view that parental background influences the choice of career for their children in tertiary institutions.

**Research Question 3:** What are the influence of employment opportunities on students' choice of agricultural education as a career in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

**Table 3: Respondents Mean Responses on Employment Opportunities Influences on Students' Choice of Agricultural Education as a Career in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State.**

S/N	Statement	Students (n=170)			Graduates (n=100)		
		X	SD	REMARK	X	SD	REMARK
1.	High rate of employment opportunities for graduates	3.00	0.25	Agree	3.03	0.33	Agree
2.	Opportunities for graduate trainees on the job	2.99	0.36	Agree	2.80	0.36	Agree
3.	Part-time employment for students	3.10	0.25	Agree	3.10	0.41	Agree
4.	Careers with good pay package for the employees	2.70	0.34	Agree	2.82	0.26	Agree
5.	Careers with employment opportunities in both private and public	2.77	0.36	Agree	2.89	0.36	Agree

6.	Careers that encourages self –employment	3.00	0.30	Agree	2.74	0.35	Agree
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	2.84	0.30	Agree	2.84	0.35	Agree

Source: (Field Survey, 2022).

Data in Table 3; revealed that the respondents agreed that employment opportunities for agricultural education students in tertiary institutions influences their choice of agricultural education as a career in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. High rate of employment opportunities for graduates (3.00 & 3.03), Opportunities for graduate trainees on the job (2.99 & 2.80), part-time employment for students (3.10 & 3.10), career with good pay package for the employees (2.70 & 2.82), career with employment opportunities for both private and public establishment (2.77 & 2.89), career that encourages self - employment (3.00 & 2.74). Furthermore result revealed that the standard deviation ranging from 0.25 – 0.36 for students while graduates range from 0.26 – 0.41. These indicated homogeneity which showed that the respondents were close in their responses. The findings are in line with the works of Bojawoye & Mbamwa (2006) who posited that students tend to choice careers that offer opportunities for employment.

**Research Question 4:** What are the peer group influences on students' choice of agricultural education as a career in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

**Table 4: Respondents Mean Responses on Peer Group Influence on Students' Choice of Agricultural education as a Career in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State.**

S/N	Statement	Students (n=170)			Graduates (n=100)		
		X	SD	REMARK	X	SD	REMARK
1.	Belief of the peer group	3.12	0.24	Agree	3.10	0.39	Agree
2.	Life style of the peer group	2.88	0.29	Agree	2.60	0.51	Agree
3.	Social acceptance of the peer group	3.03	0.30	Agree	2.86	0.33	Agree
4.	Peer group pressure	2.80	0.25	Agree	2.75	0.62	Agree
5.	Appraising the quality of career choice among fellow peers	2.62	0.61	Agree	3.10	0.32	Agree
6.	Interest of the peer group	2.94	0.27	Agree	2.80	0.33	Agree
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	2.88	0.27	Agree	2.72	0.42	Agree

Source: Field survey, (2022).

Data in Table 4 showed that the respondents responded in agreement that peer group influences the choice of agricultural education as a career for students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Belief of the peer group (3.12 & 3.10), lifestyle of the peer group (2.88 & 2.60), social acceptance of the peer group (3.03 & 2.86), peer group pressure (2.80 & 2.75), appraising the quality of career choice among fellow peers (2.62 & 3.10), and interest of the peer group (2.94 & 2.80). Furthermore result revealed that the standard deviation ranging from 0.24 to 0.61 for students while graduates ranging from 0.32 to 0.62, these indicated homogeneities which shows closeness in the opinion of the respondents. The findings are in agreement with Atutu (2001) who argued that peer group influence contribute a lot in the choice of career for students of tertiary institutions.

## Conclusion

A lot of factors influences students' choice of agricultural education as a career in tertiary institutions in Rivers State, such as peer group pressure, parental influence, employment opportunities available in the chosen career and environmental influence or parental background of the students amongst others.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations were made;

1. There is the need for students to make career choices, putting into considerations the student's areas of passion, strength and weaknesses, and the societal need of such trades or courses.

2 Government should endeavour to make educational programmes attractive by implementing educational policies and improving the standard of VTE workshops with modern tools and equipment in such a way that VTE students would become practically proficient after having access to series of workshop training.

2. Government should re-establish and reintegrated industrial training (IT) opportunities, in such a way that students who are posted to industries and organization do so in reflection of their areas of specializations; this is to align their training experiences with that of their chosen trade or course of study; therewith, improve their desire for such vocational programmes.
3. VTE teachers/lecturers must be updated with subsequent training and retraining of modern or new VTE instructions and developments, which must be supervised by relevant government institutions or agencies for result oriented outcome of such programmes.

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