

UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN



THE ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FIRST (141ST) INAUGURAL LECTURE

**“IN CHOOSING OUR CAREERS HIT-OR-MISS,
WE MISS MORE THAN HIT”**

BY

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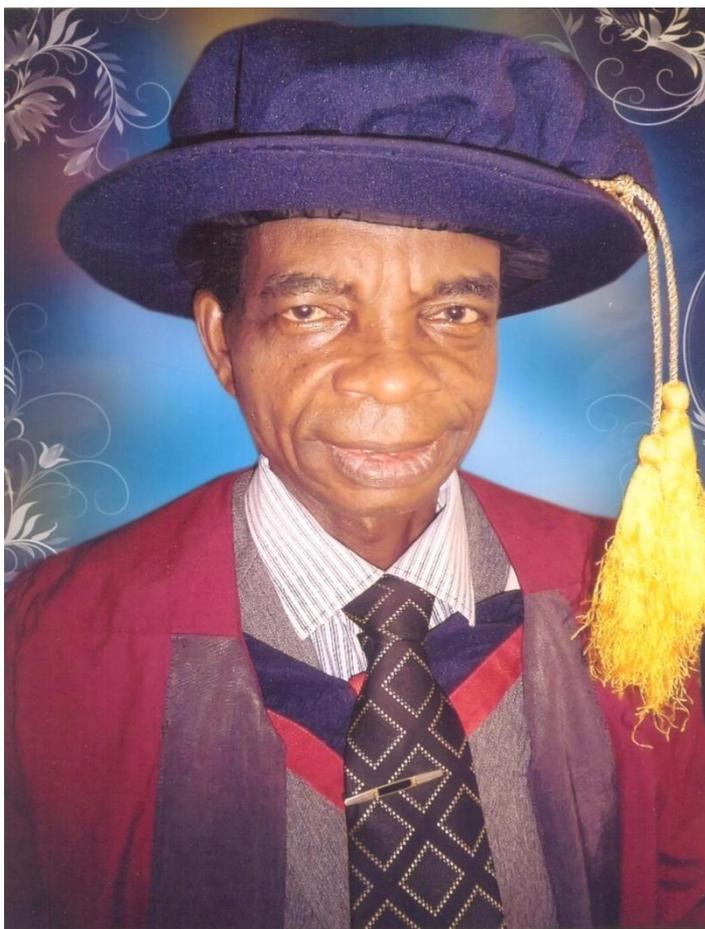
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My Lords Spiritual and Temporal,
Distinguished Students of Counsellor Education,
Gentlemen of the Print and Electronic Media,
Members of My Family: Nuclear and Extended,
Esteemed Invited Guests and Friends
Great Unilorites!
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

Preamble

I owe a world of gratitude to God Almighty for making it possible for me to *career* my way in life to this point where I stand before this august body to deliver the One Hundred and Forty-first Inaugural Lecture of the

University of Ilorin, titled *“In choosing our careers hit-or-miss, we miss more than hit”*. I thank God for His favour, mercy and grace that have been there all along to chart the course of my career in line with His will to the point where I stand today. It is with a sincere heart that I offer Him gut-level sacrifice of praise and gratitude in thanksgiving, worship, adoration and honour. May He remain exalted and magnified forever and ever (Amen).

I also wish to sincerely thank the University Administration for giving me this once-in-a-life-time opportunity to deliver this lecture. My prayer is that under the able leadership of the Vice-Chancellor, Professor AbdulGaniyu Ambali, University of Ilorin will continue its “better-by-far” stride far into the future in Nigerian Education.

Introduction: My journey into Guidance and Counselling

I studied Vocational Technical Education for my Bachelor’s Degree at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. While looking for a topic for my final year project, I came across one which caught my fancy: *“Follow-up studies of former students”*. It was one of the topics covered in a Vocational Education course offered in my Department. I then suggested to my project supervisor that I wished to follow-up the former students of Comprehensive High School, Aiyetoro in the then Western Region of Nigeria. He agreed and successfully supervised it. After my one-year NYSC service in 1976, I got an appointment at the Institute of Technology, Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin as a lecturer. I left my sick father in my hometown, Ipee, Oyun L.G.A., Kwara State, to take up that appointment. Just three days into the new job, a relation was sent from home to fetch me saying that my father’s sickness had got

worse and that he was going to be taken to UCH, Ibadan, for treatment. He said it was proper for me to go home because I might be required to donate blood at UCH.

I left for home only to get there and find a large crowd of people gathered at the church cemetery to bury my father; he had been dead before the man left home to call me. I was very close to my father. Hence, his death was a great blow to me. After a day or two of some tear-shedding I went back to my new job in Ilorin. However, the frustration of my father being no longer around to enjoy part of my earnings as the fruits of his years of labour on me was devastating. It was for that reason I endured the drudgery of the job for only five months, took a French leave and began looking for just any course of study at the Master's level as a strategy for coping with my sadness. The course that I readily found was Master of Library Science at ABU, Zaira. Again when it was time to write the thesis, I suggested to my supervisor, Prof. Ronald C. Benge that I wished to follow-up the former students of the Department of Library Science, ABU, Zaria. He too, like my supervisor at the B.Ed. level, readily agreed. And again, I successfully completed the work, coming out with one of the best results in the Department.

I had qualified as a Librarian and thought that I would make a career in librarianship. My first port of call was the same institution I left earlier very unceremoniously and absurdly. To my chagrin, my plea was rejected with the decision that the institution did not send me to study librarianship and it did not need an extra librarian. Cogent as that argument was it was a shocking news to me, and in order to manage it I ran frantically to other tertiary institutions around with my Master's degree in Library

Science as my credential. It was to no avail. What providence used to cushion the shock was Kwara State Education Management Board which employed me as a Mathematics teacher in one of its secondary schools in Ilorin, the famous C & S College. I worked there very assiduously from August, 1978 to March, 1981. When I was leaving many of my students testified that I was the best mathematics teacher they ever came across (None of them was aware that I did not major in Math).

In March 1981, I was admitted to Ohio University, Athens, Ohio in the U.S. to study Guidance and Counselling at the Ph.D. level. For the fact that my master's degree was not in Guidance and Counselling, my Ph.D. programme was planned in such a way that I was made to begin doing master's level courses first. After successfully doing as many courses as those admitted for the master's programme, I made a request that I be permitted to do my master's research project in order to earn an M.Ed. degree in Guidance and Counselling before the Ph.D.

The Faculty agreed with my point that I had taken enough courses to earn a master's degree in Guidance and Counselling. However, they argued that, Ohio University has a policy of offering to its students only the certificate bearing the title of the programme for which they were admitted. Hence, I was not allowed to do a research project at the Master's level. In the place of a certificate, I was issued with a signed official document that stated that though I had completed my master's course requirement, no master's degree certificate was issued because I was admitted only for Ph.D.

When it was time to submit my doctoral dissertation

topic, I decided to work on, “*Needs assessment follow-up study of the former students of the Guidance, Counseling and Student Personnel programme at Ohio University who graduated between August 1977 and June 1982.*” I successfully defended my Ph.D. thesis in June 1984 and returned to Nigeria the next month.

I got appointment at the Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Ilorin, in September 1986 as Lecturer II. I guess that if you have followed my story keenly so far, you will notice some peculiar events or milestones that God used to direct me to the career which I am doing now and which I so much enjoy doing.

As I veered my ways, as it were, from pillar to post through the maze of my life, I lacked a guidance counselor to guide me. Hence, I did much floundering. For instance, partly out of the frustration of the death of my father whom I loved so well and partly due to the indirect and delayed way I was informed about it, I left my job carelessly without following due process. Of course, when I returned to my employers later they rightly refused to take me back.

Need for Guidance in Career Choice

Among Nigerian authors who have called attention to the need for guiding youths in their career choices are Achebe (1986), Bojuwoye (1986), Ipaye (1983), Makinde and Alao (1987), and Okon (1984), to mention a few. My experience also reinforces the general validity of their perceptions. In fact, none of us has to look far before the sheer size of this need begins to stare the one in the face. Also, as my humble contribution in this respect, I have called attention to the need for Guidance in Career Choice elsewhere (Omotosho, 2004a). A brief synthesis of the

needs that I called attention to are as follows:

1. The rapid changes going on in the adolescent's private world as well as in the world of work around him, call for careful planning and guidance so that the chances of making errors will be reduced to the barest minimum.
2. There is apparent lack of knowledge about work options and career alternatives.
3. An enormous cost in time and energy through floundering, **hit-or-miss** method and indecision are economically and psychologically expensive and should not be allowed to plague any youth any longer.
4. So little exists in the Nigerian market of career development literature directed to adolescent populations that no progress towards satisfactory career lives can be made by adolescents without help from others.
5. Most adults of over 40 years of age attest to the fact that they had little or no opportunity while in school to assess their personal, self-characteristics or to plan ways by which their values and goals could be achieved (Herr & Cramer, 1979, p.18). This is a yawning gap which must not be allowed to exist among the youths of today.
6. The on-going economic crunch in Nigeria causes many parents to leave home for long periods daily in search of their daily bread. Also, more women have parted ways with the full-time housewife tradition in pursuit of a career.
7. The Ministry of Labour and Productivity, National Directorate of Employment (NDE), few

rehabilitation agencies, and social work offices across Nigeria give insufficient assistance to young people in their search for jobs.

8. The prevalence of mid-life career change as a phenomenon is now high in Nigeria (Omotosho, 1999). Hence, there is an acute need for guidance in career choice.

Need for Theories in Career Development and Choice

According to Parker, Szymanski, and Patterson (2005), theories are lenses through which people understand and explain different aspects of the world. Specifically, “*a theory is a set of interrelated constructs (concept), definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena*” (Kerlinger, 1986). According to Brown (2002), good career development theories have well-defined and measurable constructs with specified levels of importance and predicted ways of interaction. They are parsimonious yet comprehensive and facilitate the understanding of past, present, and future behaviour. Good theories apply to the full range of human diversity (e.g. men, women, different cultures, and different socio-economic statuses) (Brown, 2002).

In essence, “theories are no more than a description of the nature of reality, pieced together by a single person or a team of persons”. “Theories are either supported or not supported by the research they generate. To put it differently, theories are approximations of the complex phenomena that influence career choice and development” (Brown, 2002).

According to Savickas and Walsh (1996), theories do inform day-to-day practice in a number of ways. For example, commonly used counseling instruments (e.g. interest inventories) and software programmes are based on various theoretical perspectives. Theories provide guidelines that practitioners “can use as they help their clients make career choices and as they design career development programmes” (Brown, 2002, p.10). Skilled practitioners use theories to generate and test hypotheses about individual consumers, and to scientifically guide and evaluate their practice (Tracey, 1991). Thus, theories provide important grounding for professional practice.

Holland’s Theory of Vocational Personalities in Work Environment as a Typical Theory in Popular Use

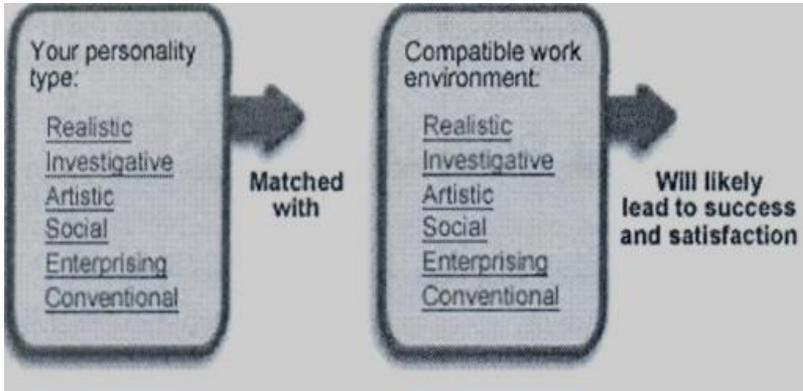
Leung (2003) has indicated that in the past few decades, the theory by Holland (1985, 1997) has guided career interest assessment internationally. The theory by Holland offers a simple and easy-to-understand typology framework on career interest and environments that could be used in career counselling and guidance. Holland postulated that vocational interest is an expression of one's personality, and that vocational interests could be conceptualized into six typologies, which are Realistic (R), Investigative (I), Artistic (A), Social (S), Enterprising (E), and Conventional (C) (Jones, 2013). If a person's degree of resemblance to the six vocational personality and interest types could be assessed, then it is possible to generate a three-letter code (e.g., SIA, RIA) to denote and summarize one's career interest. The first letter of the code is a person's primary interest type, which would likely play a major role in career choice and satisfaction. The second and third letters are secondary interest themes, and they would likely

play a lesser but still significant role in the career choice process.

Holland's theory can be summarized in six statements:

1. In our culture, most people are one of six personality types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. Some refer to these as Holland Codes or RIASEC.
2. People of the same personality type working together in a job create a work environment that fits their type. For example, when Artistic persons are together on a job, they create a work environment that rewards creative thinking and behavior – an Artistic environment.
3. There are six basic types of work environments: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, Conventional.
4. People search for environments where they can use their skills and abilities and express their values and attitudes. For example, Investigative types search for Investigative environments; Artistic types look for Artistic environments, and so forth.
5. People who choose to work in an environment similar to their personality type are more likely to be successful and satisfied.

For example, Artistic persons are more likely to be successful and satisfied if they choose a job that has an Artistic environment, like choosing to be a dance teacher in a dancing school – an environment "dominated" by Artistic type people where creative abilities and expression are highly valued.



You

Career

Fig.1: Diagrammatic Representation of Holland's Theory

Source: Savickas & Lent (2013)

- How you act and feel at work depends to a large extent on your workplace environment. If you are working with people who have a personality type like yours, you will be able to do many of the things they can do, and you will feel most comfortable with them.

Holland's Hexagon

John Holland created a hexagonal model that shows the relationship between the personality types and environments.

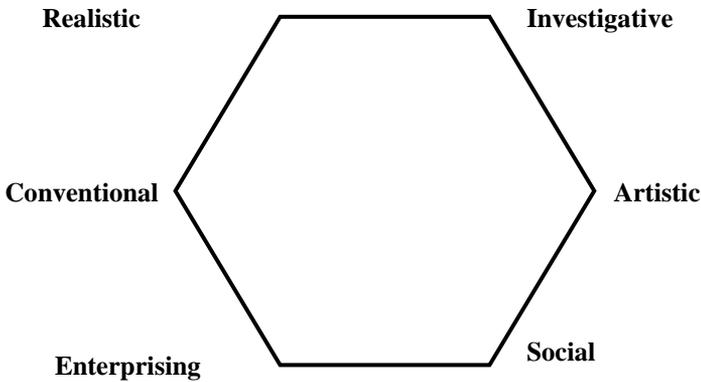


Fig. 2: Holland's Hexagon

Six Holland Types

Realistic - work with hands, machines, tools, active, practical, adventurous

High traits - practical, masculine, stable

Low traits - sensitive, feminine, stable

Occupations - construction, farming, architecture, truck driving, mail carrier

Investigative - thought, analytical approaches, explore, knowledge, ideas, not social

High traits - scholarly, intellectual, critical

Low traits - powerful, ambitious, adventurous

Occupations - biologist, chemist, dentist, veterinarian, programmer

Artistic - literary, musical, artistic activities, emotional,

creative, open

High traits - expressive, creative, spontaneous

Low traits - orderly, efficient, conventional, social, masculine

Occupations - artist, musician, poet, interior designer, writer

Social - train, inform, educate, help, supportive, avoid technical skills, empathy, relationships

High traits - cooperative, friendly, humanistic

Low traits - ambitious, creative, strong,

Occupations - social work, counseling, police officer, LPN

Enterprising - verbally skilled, persuasive, direct, leader, dominant

High traits - ambitious, adventurous, energetic

Low traits - intellectual, creative, feminine

Occupations - lawyer, business executive, politician, TV producer

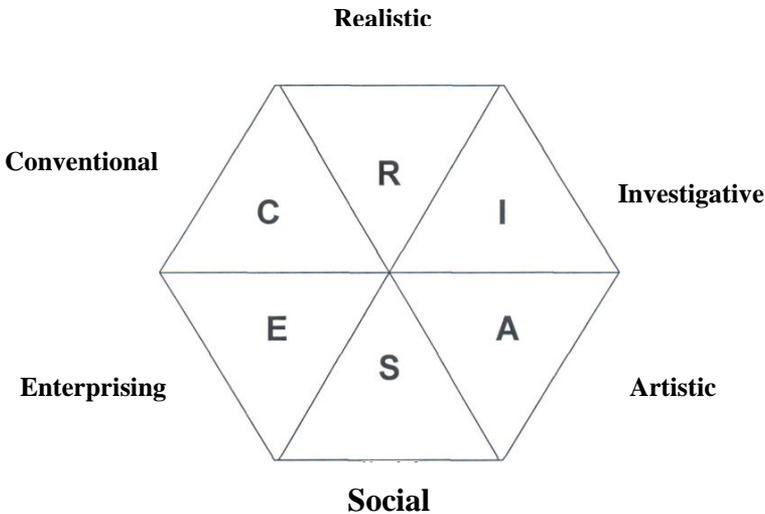
Conventional - rules and routines, provide order or direct structure, great self control, respect power and status, punctual, orderly.

High traits - stable, efficient, dependable, controlled

Low traits - intellectual, adventurous, creative

Occupations - bank teller, clerk typist, cashier, and data entry

Holland Types are usually expressed in 3 letters- Eg: RIA



- Most Masculine Types – R & E
- Most Prestigious Types – I & E
- Most Feminine Types – A & S
- Least Prestigious Types – R & C

In over 450 research studies, Holland Types appear to be stable over time and across gender and racial lines.

Consequences of Choosing Careers Hit-or-Miss

There are several concomitants of choosing our careers **hit-or-miss**. Ibrahim (2011) has called attention to some of them. I have summarized some of those from his list below in addition to those I know from personal experience:

1. **We Miss More Than Hit:** In choosing our careers **hit-or-miss**, greater is the probability of making the

wrong choice than the right one. In other words, we are more likely to miss than hit. After all, **hit-or-miss**, by definition, is a choice that was not done in a carefully planned manner (Hornby, 2006). **Hit-or-miss** method is haphazard and uncoordinated thereby increasing the chances of making the wrong choice. Even common sense teaches us that if there were many possible careers to choose from (say, hundreds of them) and only one or at most a few are well suited to the choice maker, then the probability of choosing the right one(s) becomes infinitesimally small. Career choice is not like Hobson's choice which is no choice at all because there is only one thing to choose. Rather, there are many careers to choose from. Most Nigerians who impose careers on others feel that it is a matter of *take-it-or-leave-it*.

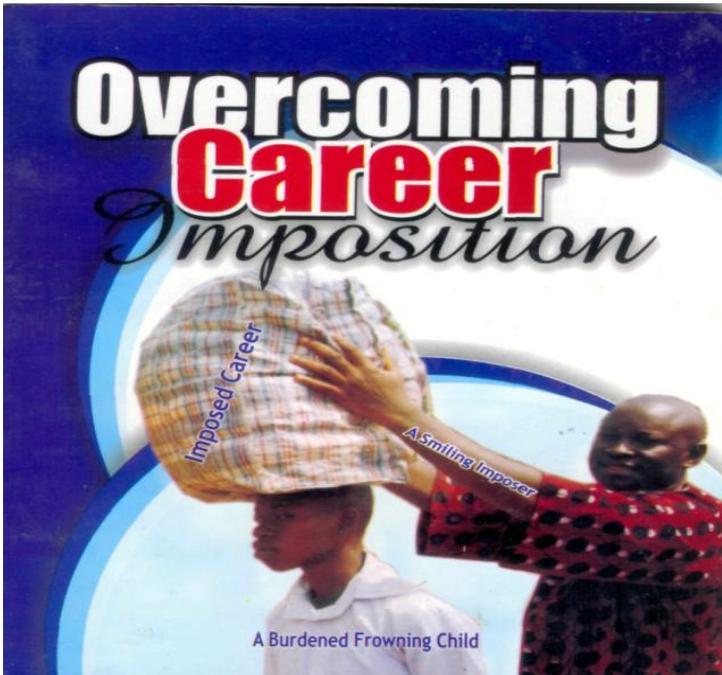


Fig. 3: A Nigerian Father Imposing a Career on His Reluctant but Helpless Son

Source: Front Cover of the book *Overcoming Career Imposition* by F.E. Ibrahim (2011). Used by permission of the author

In statistical terms, the more careers there are to choose from – and there are several hundreds, if not thousands – the smaller grows the chances of choosing right. We can depict the decreasing probability of missing the right career with the numbers displayed in Table 1:

Table 1: Chances / Probability of ‘Hitting’ or ‘Missing’

Number of Careers to Choose from	Chances/Probabilities of making the Right Choice (‘Hit’)	Chances/Probabilities of making the Wrong Choice (‘Miss’)
1 career	1 in 2 (.50)	1 in 2 (.50)
2 careers	1 in 4 (.25)	3 in 4 (.75)
3 careers	1 in 8 (.125)	7 in 8 (.875)
4 careers	1 in 16 (.063)	15 in 16 (.9375)
5 careers	1 in 32 (.031)	31 in 32 (.96875)
6 careers	1 in 64 (.016)	63 in 64 (.984375)
7 careers	1 in 128 (.008)	127 in 128 (.9921875)
8 careers	1 in 256 (.004)	255 in 256 (.9960938)
9 careers	1 in 512 (.002)	511 in 512 (.9980469)
10 careers	1 in 1,024 (.001)	1023 in 1024 (.9990234)

2. **Lack of Job Satisfaction:** There are many things which come together to give one joy in life. They include the joy of owning a house, the joy of having sound health, the joy (and stress?) of parenthood, and “the joy of doing what one likes and what one was created to do” (Ibrahim, 2011). Job satisfaction has been seen by Cohen, Swerdlik and Sturman (2013) as, “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from valuing one’s job experiences.” As the saying goes, *“To a job we like and cherish, we rise to it betimes.”* Kochhar (2006) also defined job

satisfaction as “the whole matrix of job factors that make a person like his work and be willing to head for it without distaste at the beginning of his work day”. The following “job satisfaction factors are missing in workers who lack job satisfaction (mainly because they chose that job in a **hit-or-miss** fashion, to begin with): personal well-being, close relationships among workers and management, possession of work/job skills, chance to use own initiative, initial information about the job, self-knowledge, interest, job security, etc.

3. **Being Unproductive:** An overwhelmingly large proportion of those who choose their career **hit-or-miss** usually become unproductive workers. The other variants of **hit-or-miss** career choosers also experience low or very little productivity. They include those whose careers were “imposed on them” [to borrow Ibrahim’s (2011) terminology] by parents, close relations, and those who took up the job because of the fat pay. Experience shows that because such people were not cut for the careers they are engaged in, they are not able to perform it well. It is found that when some of them are confronted with this anomaly, they retort back saying that they got employed not for work but for the monthly pay! Of course, a large chunk of work lies undone by people with such mindset. It is quite obvious that the whole economic system of which work is a part cannot thrive with that type of mentality. By now, it will not be difficult for us in this audience to agree that this is one of the work-

related root causes of many of the ills that have bedeviled the nation for so long.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, please permit me to illustrate this point with a personal family experience: The ‘baby’ of our house is called **Emmanuel Olubambi** Omotosho. You might wish to know how we came about his first and middle names: Story, Story! ... Once upon a time! ...

4. **Badly Executed Projects:** Due to the fact that the majority of workers in virtually every sector of the workforce got there in a **hit-or-miss** fashion, they do not possess the requisite skill for doing their jobs. Lack of such skill implies that the work or project executed through them will be poorly done. When we hear of buildings and other structures collapsing in various parts of Nigeria, no one traces the possible remote cause to the so-called building contractors, some of whom are quacks and know nothing about tensile stress of materials, force, properties of materials, shear stress and strain or even simple practical requirements for safety, and measurements, mix proportions of cement and mortar, theories of failure under static load, the sizes of rods, etc. Many block molders, brick-layers and other artisans are misfits and have no business molding blocks or laying them because they neither know the standards of their trade nor the laws governing nature. Some of them have become a law to themselves and so the havoc they wreck on society continues unabated and unstoppable.

5. **It Breeds Corruption, Violence and other Vices:** Many of the vices that we have to contend with willy-nilly in this country are deeply rooted, to a large extent, in the entrenched tradition of choosing our careers **hit-or-miss**. It is my humble submission that if many of us had chosen the careers our personal traits qualify us for; we would have been far gone in advancement as a nation. Today, the burning question on the lips of most well-meaning and patriotic Nigerians is “Why does corruption continue unabated in Nigeria?” From all that we have said so far, any of us could venture an answer – at least a partial one, viz: “Most of those in various positions are there by **hit-or-miss**. People without a natural inclination for functioning as service providers ‘super-compound’ the already compounded problems of this nation

My Humble Contribution to Career Choice and Development

1. As an Advocate of School-Based Placement Services

I have made a case for the establishment of school-based Placement Programmes for students. I had argued (Omotosho, 2004b) that:

A good institution that cares about its name will want to put the appropriate machinery in motion for ensuring that its products – the graduates or former students – either secure good jobs or enter reputable institutions of higher learning. Such a process is termed **Placement**.

I did not stop at that. Rather, I went on to expatiate on the concept of Placement as a method designed for facilitating the entry of students into jobs or post-secondary educational opportunities. I also called attention to the need for Placement, as well as the responsibilities for Placement. I then went on to outline certain Placement activities which call for a need to understand students' interests, abilities and plans as well as the opportunities available to them.

Furthermore, I called attention to the fact that Placement is both in-school and out-of-school service. The former consists of helping students to select an appropriate curriculum; the subject within a curriculum, extra-curricular activities, special grouping or special classes, etc. In Nigeria, JS III marks the transition from following a single prescribed curriculum to Placement in one of several alternative curricula. Placement within a curriculum of say Arts, Science or Commercial at JS III is extremely important because of its eventual influence on careers, particularly for those occupations requiring a university education. The latter (i.e. out-of-school Placement) should include assisting youth to secure part-time and long vacation employment, full-time employment after graduation from senior secondary school, and Placement in tertiary institutions. It can also provide Placement service for those who may wish to terminate their academic work at this level.

I concluded my submission with a model of a step-by-step strategy for establishing a school-based placement programme which I adapted for use in Nigeria from that of Brown and Feit (1977).

2. **Through the Conduct of Follow-up Studies of Former Students:**

Omotosho, (2004b) reported on an observation made earlier by McGowan and Porter (1976) that employers use **hit-or-miss** methods to select their employees, depending upon a casual visual survey of his/her education and job experience. While some employees selected on the basis of such ‘criteria’ do work out satisfactorily, many are misfits, poor producers, and dissatisfied employees as a result of such random selection.

Furthermore, my personal experience while conducting follow-up studies during my final year at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and at Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, has shown that no educational institution worth its salt should sit idly by, merely playing a **hit-or-miss** game in the matter of advertising its finished products (the former students) to the market of the world of work or of higher education.

It was on the basis of the facts above that I unequivocally pointed to the need for follow-up (Omotosho, 1993; 1995), spelt out its aims and objectives, as well as the activities involved in the conduct of it. Furthermore, I wrote on methods of gathering data in follow-up studies and on problems that are usually encountered in the conduct of follow-up studies.

3. **The Phenomenon of Mid-Life Career Change:**

Super (1957) has studied this phenomenon and reported its prevalence among American citizens. After reading about his findings, I was intrigued and wondered if it exists in Nigeria nearly half a century after it was reported in America. On this account, I undertook a survey

in 1999 in Ilorin, a typical Nigerian city, to investigate the prevalence of mid-life career change among males and whether or not it was influenced by the workers' income. I surveyed a sample of 308 men with a questionnaire tagged "Career Pattern of Men Questionnaire" (CPMQ). The CPMQ was a modified version of Super's (1957) "Career Pattern for Males". Using appropriate procedures and statistics to analyze the data, the results showed that about two males out of 10 males changed their careers. I had indicated in that study that this prevalence level of mid-life career change was sufficiently high to warrant the conclusion that this phenomenon is now with us in Nigeria. Since the aspirations that men set for themselves in life are primarily expressed through the institutions of work, counsellors and other leaders in our educational institutions should work together to ensure that the necessary skills for effecting a smooth transition between one career and the other are taught/included early enough in the course of one's learning/education. I concluded on the note that this issue should not be left to the whims of those who choose careers for others through a **hit-or-miss** method (Omosho, 1999).

Also a statistically significant difference $\{(X^2 (df = 1) = 6.45, p < 0.05)\}$ was found between less and high income males in the prevalence of mid-career change patterns. Moreover, a larger proportion of low income workers than high income workers changed their careers. As a sequel to the effort in the just reported study, I looked at factors influencing career change and non-change among males in Ilorin metropolis (Omosho, 2000). The variable investigated included age, religion, income, educational status, type of employer, and years of training undertaken.

The results showed that male career changers and non-changers differed significantly on the basis of age, income, educational status and years of training, (but not on the basis of religion and type of employer).

I had noted in that study the implication that since *Age, Income, Educational Status* and *Years of training* are factors found to influence mid-life career change, those factors should be further studied to know why this is so. Relevant data obtained from such studies can become very useful in facilitating the process of career counselling in school and job settings. Lastly, since the client whom counsellors will encounter come from a wide array of groups, backgrounds and experiences, counsellors who work with young people should not make the latter feel guilty even if they make initial errors in the process of choosing their careers.

4. Undergraduates' Perception of Factors Influencing Career Choice:

For this study, I randomly selected a sample of 460 undergraduates of University of Ilorin. The purpose was to investigate their perception of certain factors which have been shown in the literature as being dynamic in influencing people's career development and choice. In particular, the respondents were each required to indicate the one factor which exerted the greatest influence on his/her career development/choice at the time he/she made his/her career choice. (Table 3)

Table 3: Rank Orders of Factors Influencing Career Choice of Undergraduates.

Factor	Frequency	Percent	Rank
My Intellectual Ability/IQ	89	19.3	1 st
My Circumstances in Life/Accidentals	58	12.6	2 nd
My Interest/Likes/Taste	50	10.9	3 rd
My Family Members/Relatives' Influences	48	10.4	4 th
My Environment of Growth	36	7.8	5 th
My Self-Concept/Self-Esteem	36	7.8	6 th
My Peers/Friends Influences	32	7.0	7 th
My Aptitude/Special Ability	27	5.9	8 th
My Personality/Traits	22	4.8	9 th
My Stereotypes (Ideas about Careers)	18	3.9	10
My School and Its Staff	14	3.0	11 th
My Fantasies/Unrealistic Planning	13	2.8	12 th
My Value System	12	2.6	13 th
My Sex (Men's Career vs. Women's Career)	5	1.1	14 th

From Table 3 it can be seen that *Intellectual Ability* or *IQ* was the factor perceived by the largest proportion (nearly 20% or 1 in every 5) of the undergraduates of University of Ilorin, as exerting the greatest influence on their career choice. *Circumstances in their lives* or *Accidentals* were perceived by the second largest proportion of undergraduates as exerting influence on their career choice.

Among the most salient implications of the findings of this study is the fact that no factor was perceived as having exerted no influence at all on career choice (Table 3). Also, due to the fact that so-called 'chance' or

'*accidents of life*' was highly ranked (2nd, Table 3), as influencing undergraduates' career choice, due attention must be paid to such *chance* or *accidentals of life* factor in the lives of undergraduates. An enormous cost of time and energy through floundering, *hit-or-miss* method and indecision are economically and psychologically too expensive to be allowed to plague Nigeria's youths at this time in our development (Omosho, 2002, p. 82).

5. Career Work with Retirees

I extended my effort and interest in career development and choice into non-school settings as well. I did this by joining two other colleagues to do a quasi-experimental study using a 2x3 factorial design to determine whether or not the use of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) would be effective in improving retirees' attitude towards participation in politics (Esere, Omosho & Arewah, 2008). We assigned 24 retirees (mean age = 55.5 years) randomly to one treatment and one control groups. A validated instrument titled "Retirees' Attitude towards Political Participation Questionnaire" (RAPQ) was administered to the two groups before and after the experimental programme. The data were analyzed using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA), using the pre-treatment test scores as covariates. Results showed that the treatment package (REBT) was effective in improving retirees' attitude towards political participation, their religious affiliation and age notwithstanding. The effectiveness of the treatment package could be attributed to the opportunities provided the retirees to rediscover themselves through positive self-evaluation of their worth and untapped potentials. It was

concluded that the efficacy of the treatment condition is a promising development for the helping professions; especially, it will be of benefit for counsellors. Among the recommendations made were that retirees should always seek counselling to enable them face the daunting challenges of retirement and rediscover themselves for further use to the society.

6. Problems Confronting Unemployed Youth

Another area to which I directed my research efforts in collaboration with others was the perennial challenges of unemployment among Nigerian youths (Omotosho, Idowu, Esere, & Arewah, 2009). It cannot be overemphasized that the problem of unemployment has bedeviled Nigeria for long. For our humble contribution, we used multi-stage sampling techniques to select 1,750 unemployed youths from the six geo-political zones of Nigeria, including Abuja. A research instrument titled “Problems and Counselling Needs of Unemployed Youth Questionnaire” was used to gather relevant data. Data collected were analyzed using appropriate statistical packages. The results indicated that unemployed youths in Nigeria have clusters of problems revolving around finance, family, health and the socio-psychological. Their greatest counselling need was on how to develop skills for making themselves marketable.

Based on the findings, it was recommended that all tiers of government should enhance the chances for Nigerian youths to get employed so that such graduates will not become a source of menace to the society in future. Our educational system must be modified so that better recognition and status can be given to the worth of blue-

collar jobs as the case is in many of the developed countries of the world. Our overemphasis on certificate acquisition should be done away with so that youths will no longer look down on blue-collar jobs.

7. A Proposed Model for Career Decision-Making

Another modest contribution I have made to career choice among youths is a Model of Career Decision Making Process (Omosho, 2004a). There are numerous career decision making models available in the literature. The model I have proposed is actually adapted from one by Borman, Colson, Cox and Herring (1981) who adapted it from Epperly, Forrer, Cooper, Inge, and Trabandt (1977). It has been chosen because it follows a logical, practical sequence that would be found easy to follow even in the Nigerian school setting. [Due to the fact that I found the model useful and practical, I adapted it similarly for teaching the topic “*Problem-solving and decision-making skills for dealing with three critical problems confronting students on campus*” which is one of the topics in GNS 211 (*Philosophy, logic and Nigeria Culture*). The three critical problems that student face on campus centre around **cheating during examination, pre-marital sex, and cultism on campus**]. For many years now, I have successfully used this adapted model to help GNS 211 students learn how to avoid being ensnared and overcome whenever they are faced with challenges in those three critical areas of campus life (Omosho, 2013)

The seven steps of the proposed model are the following

- Step I: Identify the problem or decision to be made
- Step II: Gather information

- Step III: Identify viable alternatives
- Step IV: Weigh the evidence (Evaluate the remaining alternatives)
- Step V: Choose from among the alternatives
- Step VI: Take action (Make a plan for implementing the decision)
- Step VII: Review/Modify the decision (Evaluated the action taken)

Each of the seven steps is spelt out in detail in the proposed model, replete with specific guidelines for its implementation (Omotosho, 2004a, pp.181-184).

8. Career Pattern Inventory (CPI)

This inventory is a seven-part (Parts A-G) instrument being jointly developed by me (as the Principal test developer), and Dr. E. Nyarko-Sampson, my former student from Ghana. We decided to jointly develop it for use among Nigerian and Ghanaian primary and secondary school students (Omotosho & Nyarko-Sampson, 2013a). The idea for developing the CPI grew out of my personal conviction that what one wants to become in life is an important question for everybody, especially youths. I strongly believe that even if one's concern is only for "today" today is the starting point for tomorrow (Omotosho, 2004a). With that frame of mind, it was easy for me to see the necessity of helping the adolescent boy or girl to get a handle on today. In that way, he/she can pull him/herself into the future with regards to finding the appropriate career. The development of the CPI is an important role that my colleague and I wish to play in the life of the adolescent.

The test **Construction** stage has been done. At this

stage, the seven parts of the CPI are the following:

Part A: Values

Part B: Knowing What You Do Not Want

Part C: What is Your Life Style?

Part D: Career Recipe

Part E: Sources of Information About Careers

Part F: Interest and Occupational Alternatives

Part G: Personal Career Action Plan

Right now, we are getting set to begin the **Test Tryout** stage. The representative samples of test takers for this stage will be drawn from both Nigeria and Ghana. **Item Analysis** and **Test Revision** stages will follow in that order. This is how, for now, I have gone with my Ghanaian counterpart in this humble contribution to career development and choice of youth. I am inspired by the fact that the collaboration has been working and it is hoped that our efforts will be rewarding when completed.

9. My Contribution through Community Services I: Career Day & Field Trips

According to Ipaye (1983), “**Career Day**” is known by various names: “**Careers Convention**”, “**Careers Conference**”, “**Careers Forum**”, “**Career Symposium**”, “**Career Week**” or “**Careers Consultation**”. I have joined my other colleagues in the Department in Counsellor Education to teach our Final Year students of the B.Ed. programme as well as our M.Ed. programme students how to organize “**Career Day**” activities in secondary schools in Ilorin. In fact, in some years in the past, our students (especially those in the Sandwich programme) opted to stage their Career Day activities outside Ilorin, such as Ogbomoso, Ede, Jebba, Osogbo, etc.

We have used Career Day to stimulate career thoughts in the minds of secondary school students and to widen their occupational horizons. We have also used it to help them to focus attention on particular jobs in order to help individual students crystallize their preferences (Oladele, 2007). Akinade (2012) has noted that the insightful experience about the world of work helps to modify their perception of some occupations.

At their second and third years, our undergraduate students are made to undertake **Field Trips**. It is a tour or excursion they undertake to places in the city of Ilorin such as the Social Welfare or the National Directorate of Employment. They also visit some Vocational Rehabilitation Centres in and outside Ilorin. The purpose is to help them gain first-hand information about various vocations and the people involved in them. In a course I teach at the M.Ed. level (EGC 668: Careers Education) I require students who offer it to make a visit to a traditional occupation such as *pottery, drumming, dying (tie-and-dye), black-smithing, hair-dressing, cane basketry*, etc. They have to write a report on their visit to highlight areas such as Name of the occupation, Entry requirements, Apprenticeship methods, Duration of Apprenticeship, Hazards in the occupation, Cost of training, Income, etc. This is done as part of the Continuous Assessment for the course.

10. My Contribution through Community Services II: Pre-Marital Counselling

Trunk (2013), whose career advice has appeared in more than 200 newspapers worldwide, has posited that

marriage is as important as one's career. In fact, there is a sense in which we can see marriage as a career. On the basis of this belief, I have got involved in doing pre-marital counseling with young adults in preparation for their marriage. I do this in conjunction variously with six clergymen (Revds. Engr. S.O. Oladejo, Ayo Okewo, B. Olugbemi, J.A. Oyedepo, Pastors Engr. D.O. Olosunde and Dr. H.O. Owolabi) in a well organized eclectic group counselling approach that combines the best of secular and pastoral methods to ensure that the *couple-to-be* understand **what marriage** is as well as **how to have a successful marriage** as a 'career'. The two sessions are intensive and comprehensive. The success rate has been phenomenal: out of a total of 127 cases handled since 1997, only one case has not worked as hoped.

I also seize opportunities that come my way to speak at marriage receptions, pointing out to the newly wedded the need to do all they can in order to make their marriage succeed. On some of such occasions I have used **some teaching aids** to drive my points home just as one would do in a classroom setting. One of these **teaching aids** is the BEFORE MARRIAGE/AFTER MARRIAGE figure (Fig.4), which I use to strongly drive home several points including the point that couples should not hesitate in getting seriously involved in their marriage career for if they don't while they are still young, beautiful/handsome, ageing sets in too soon when it would be rather too late, to do well in one's marriage 'career'.



Fig. 4: Before Marriage / After Marriage
Source: Unknown

11. International Dimension of my Contribution

More recently, I have turned the focus of my contributions in part to the international scene. I have achieved this by collaborating with a Ghanaian former student of mine to look at entrepreneurial careers, a theme that has been gaining the attention of researchers recently. In one of such efforts, we have argued from the position that sustainable development cannot be successfully

realized and maintained in any country unless its citizens have positive self-knowledge and wholesome aspirations towards entrepreneurial careers (Omotosho & Nyarko – Sampson, 2013b). Hence, in order to ascertain whether Ghana is ready for sustainable development now and in the nearest future, we surveyed a sample of 2,000 Ghanaian secondary school students in order to determine the level of their self-knowledge and the relationship between such self-knowledge and their aspirations for entrepreneurial careers.

Among the key findings of this study was the fact that the level of Ghanaian students' self-knowledge was high, far above the cut-off point of 40.0 on the scale used. Also, a high and positive relationship exists between students' self-knowledge and their aspirations for entrepreneurial careers; $r (df=1998) = 0.82, p < 0.05$. Based on these findings, we concluded that the relevant resources for sustainable development are already present in Ghana; the only thing left is for the government, its agencies and persons with a stake in Ghanaian education and sustainable development to channel these resources appropriately in order to achieve and maintain sustainable development.

A further stretch of this joint international effort was to determine if significant differences do exist between male and female Ghanaian students in their aspirations for entrepreneurial careers. It was discovered from the results that such difference exists and it was significant at the 0.05 level of significance (Omotosho & Nyarko-Sampson, 2013c).

The major implication of this result for teachers is the need to operate an entrepreneurial education curriculum that will be able to adapt to the requirements of this

burgeoning field. Such curriculum must be built in such a way that it can be easily amenable to change and the modifications that new findings in the field will necessitate. Also, one of the implications of this result **for counsellors** – especially because of the high level of aspirations for entrepreneurs among Ghanaian youths – is for school counselors to expect and get prepared for a new breed of clientele. Secondly, Ghana’s institutions of higher learning must be subjected to restructuring on a continuing basis in order to accommodate the ever-expanding field of entrepreneurship.

12. My Humble Contributions through Ph.D. Supervision

I have made some contributions to the burgeoning field of career choice and development through the Ph.D. theses I have supervised. Four of the nine Ph.D. works supervised by me are career-oriented:

- (a) **Lasode (2001)** was my first Ph.D. supervisee. Her work was titled *“Perception of parental treatment, socio-economic background, and vocational interests of secondary school students in three Nigerian states.”* She adapted Bakare’s Vocational Interest Inventory (VII), the Bronfenbrenner Parental Treatment Questionnaire (BPTQ) and Adegoke’s Socio-Economic Background Questionnaire (SEBQ) for her study. Her findings revealed that perception of parental treatment as well as socio-economic background contribute to vocational interest of secondary school students. She recommended, on the basis of the results, that counseling services, especially in the area of vocational

interest, should be provided to Nigerian adolescents in order to enhance better vocational choices.

- (b) **Ariyibi (2011)** studied “*Creativity, risk tolerance and locus of control as correlates of entrepreneurship inclination of students in Nigerian public Universities*”. The relevance of this study in the burgeoning field of entrepreneurship cannot be overemphasized. It was a trail-blazer in the sense that it was the first study in our Department that made entrepreneurship its sole focus. The results showed that the three independent variables (creativity, risk tolerance and locus of control) were significantly related to entrepreneurial inclination of undergraduates at the 0.05 level of significance. Her suggestions, based on the results, included the need for government to ensure that career guidance services be functionally provided at each level of education in order to enhance youths’ understanding of entrepreneurship. The study’s worth is enhanced by the fact that the National Universities Commission (NUC) has given the directive that all Universities in Nigeria must establish entrepreneurial development centres.
- (c) **Titiloye (2012)** worked on “*Efficacy of rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy and Reality Therapy (RT) in reducing mathophobia among in-school adolescents in Ilorin, Nigeria.*” She used a multistage sampling procedure to appropriately select 120 secondary school students to participate in this quasi-experimental study. The objective of the study was to determine if the use of REBT and RT could bring about reduction in mathophobia (irrational fear or dread of mathematics) that is so pervasive in Nigeria today. The results were startling: the two counselling packages (REBT and RT)

significantly reduced mathophobia levels among the experimental groups of students. The implications of the results are salient and of great relevance to counsellors, students, teachers, parents and the government. I see a study of this type as having great potential for revolutionizing the teaching of mathematics and the lives of students. In fact, Mr. Vice Chancellor, Sir, it is my opinion that this is another area where this “**better by far**” university could blaze the trail if it spearheads the replication of the study as a community service to the state and nation.

- (d) **Nyarko-Sampson (2013)** was concerned with “*Self-knowledge, Family influence, Career knowledge level and senior secondary school students’ aspiration for entrepreneurial career in Ghana*”. He began by positing that career aspiration of students is poorly matched with labour market trends. This poses a huge problem for career development which in turn contributes to unemployment. The main finding was that self-knowledge, family influence and level of career knowledge are related to secondary school students’ aspiration for entrepreneurial careers.

The implication of the study includes the fact that issues related to career choice should be considered as one of the important needs of secondary school students. Also counsellors should take into consideration personal and contextual variables of students during career counselling. It was recommended that entrepreneurship education should be incorporated into the secondary school curriculum in Ghana.

Conclusion

I wish to summarize this lecture as follows:

I began my journey into guidance and counseling in a *hit-or-miss* manner until by a streak of Divine intervention I found this area of specialization to be the one actually cut out for me. If I had found the right guidance from an expert in time, I might not have done some of the floundering I did at the initial stage.

It is not every youth who will be as fortunate as I to find his way out of the woods at last if not guided when making his career choice. It will do our youth a world of good if they are not left on their own to flounder first. In order for our youth not to be involved in wasteful **hit-or-miss** career choice activities, I have called attention, as Awoyemi (2012) has done, to the need for guidance for our youth in their career choice activities.

I have indicated that developing theories of career development and choice is an area of our educational system that still lacks the type of attention it requires. A major consequence of our practice of choosing our careers **hit-or-miss** is that we miss more than hit. **Hit-or-miss** career choices are made by the choice makers themselves or by significant others who impose just any career on them willy-nilly. Peer pressure is another cause of **hit-or-miss** method of choosing a career. Such practices do not augur well for the educational advancement of the country.

The probability that a person who chooses a career through a **hit-or-miss** method will find the right choice becomes very dim with even very few careers to choose from. Translated into practical reality, this tradition has caused the country so much in economic losses that the practice must discontinue.

I have illustrated with John L. Holland's Theory of Career Development and Choice the possibilities that lie in using an organized and standardized system for approaching our career choice activities in Nigeria.

I have made some humble contributions in this area through the following means: my research endeavours singly and jointly, a proposed model for career decision making, the development of a Career Patterns Inventory (in progress), Ph.D. students' dissertations supervision, community services, and collaboration or joint research activities at the international level.

Recommendations

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, sir, career choice is a very important area of a person's life. Also it is one area of a person's life in which many other persons (either as invited persons or interlopers/impositors) are interested and wish to be involved willy-nilly. For this reason, I have made my recommendations such that all involved have a piece or more of the recommendations. I begin with the general first, and then the specifics:

General Recommendations

1. Many persons do and should make their contribution if the goals of career development and choice are to be successfully achieved. However, no one should make his/her contribution in a **hit-or-miss**, haphazard or impository manner with the mindset that the youth is a helpless pawn in the hands of adults and has no contribution of his own to make.

2. Career development and choice should be seen by all of us as a cooperative effort rather than the exclusive preserve of any stakeholder, even not parent's, teachers, counselors, etc.

3. Career development and choice must be seen as a process that continues throughout life; it must be seen neither as a point-in-time incident nor as an impromptu intervention.

4. All must accept the notion that helping to locate a youth in terms of his/her career in the future must be based on coming to terms with the personal values and life purposes of that youth, with his/her personal characteristics and traits that are different from those of others.

The Career Choice Maker

5. This individual must see his/her role as primary; it is his/her right which he/she must exercise assertively. As much as lies within his/her power, he/she should not abdicate this role to the whims of others. If he/she allows others to choose a career for him/her in a hit-or-miss, hurried way he/she will regret at leisure because he/she will find himself/herself as a square peg in a round hole, just enduring and not enjoying the working life.

Parents or Guardians

6. They should discuss the economic conditions of the family with the youth and assist him/her to plan a course of action with regard to educational and training needs.

7. Parents or Guardians should help their children/wards make contact with specialists for accurate information relevant to their concerns. They should learn about the relationships between specific educational

patterns and occupations in order to assist their children/wards to plan their educational experiences effectively.

The Teacher

8. The teacher should identify and refer students who have problems related to self-identity, decision-making, adjustment or home to appropriate personnel.

9. The teacher is to provide information integral to particular subject matter which helps students to link what they are doing in a particular course with future educational or career options.

10. The teacher is encouraged to always infuse concrete examples of pertinent theoretical notions from the world of work into course contents.

The School Counsellor

11. According to Shertzer and Stone (1981), the secondary school counsellor, as the principal career guidance agent of the school, should plan the career development programme and design the activities and services that would facilitate the career needs of students.

12. The counsellor should implement the functions to be involved such as counseling, conducting student assessment (ability, interest, personality, etc.).

13. The counsellor should also operate activities that are career-related such as career centre, job placement programmes, consulting, etc.

The Government

14. All tiers of government (federal, state and local) should see career choice as a priority area in the lives of the

citizens of this nation. No stone should be left unturned in giving full support to issues associated with the careers of Nigerians, especially the career choice of youths who are the future leaders.

15. Proper recognition should be given to the role that counsellors can play in such scheme. Through adequate funding a lot of counsellors can be trained and employed to coordinate, plan and implement the needed programmes in all schools even from the primary school level. The present number of counsellors in Nigeria is a far cry from the needed quantity; the job is herculean.

University of Ilorin

16. This University, otherwise known as the “Better by far” university, can and should blaze the trail in this venture too. We in Counsellor Education stand ready and prepared to put our expertise to useful effects with proper cues from the Administration. The processes involved in developing tests and theories or for adapting foreign ones for local use are not easy. However, with encouragement and funds from Administration, there will be no limit to the extent we can go. Attempts in the past have been hindered by lack of funds.

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Mr. Vice Chancellor, Sir, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you all for giving me your attention. God bless you.

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