

Enhancing Students' Entrepreneurial Skills through Counseling Services: Challenges and Prospects for Secondary School Counselors in Bamenda, Cameroon

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to examine the challenges of and prospects for Secondary School Counselors in Bamenda Municipality in their attempt to enhance students' entrepreneurial skills through school counseling. The study was guided by two specific objectives focussing on the challenges encountered by counselors in the administration of their duties, and the way forward on improving counseling services for enhancement of students' entrepreneurship skills. The research method was the qualitative method, and the research design was the exploratory design, where qualitative opinions gotten from 10 purposively sampled school counselors using an Educational Counseling and Entrepreneurship Interview Guide (ECEIG). Thematic analysis and descriptive narrations were used to analyze the opinions gotten and results summaries displayed on tables and followed descriptive narrations. From the findings, the school counselors identified some of their challenges to include; limited awareness of parents and students on the importance of counseling services, limited time for practical clinical counseling diagnoses and practices and as a result, more of theory than practice, lack of counseling laboratories, reluctance by professionals to visit schools to talk to children on entrepreneurship and students lack of interest in entrepreneurship related activities among other challenges. As the way forward, the counselors identified; the training of more school counselors in order to reduce the wide counselor-student ratio and bring it to standard, mandatory open days where students are exposed to different career, professional and entrepreneurial orientations and placements from counselors and professionals invited by school authorities to motivate the students, counselors also suggested that entrepreneurship be made a compulsory subject in secondary schools, and not only that, but students could pushed towards

showing prove of the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills as a precondition for graduating from secondary schools in the country among others.

Keywords: students' Entrepreneurial Skills, Counseling Services, Challenges and Prospects, School Counselors, Cameroon.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of entrepreneurship education and educational counseling towards entrepreneurship skills development among school children cannot be overemphasized. Gana (2001) opines that entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities in an environment and be able to establish and run a small medium or big enterprise successfully based on the identified opportunities. According to Okachi (2005), entrepreneurship is manifestation of effective control of human intelligence, skills and financial resources to achieve great profit which involves risk taking in human and financial resources. Why the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills is very important at the secondary education level is because secondary education plays a vital role in the actualization of self-skills which helps in boosting the economy of any Nation and also reduces unemployment, thus, the need for partnership between government, employers and schools.

The increasing professionalization of 21st century educational systems and the quest by schools and educational stakeholders to keep track of their progress in guiding students towards professionalism and entrepreneurship development has put school guidance counselors and their services in a critical position in the educational life of students. This is because offering career and entrepreneurial guidance to these students may not only help them make more informed decisions, but could most importantly inspire them to develop and enhanced hidden professional and entrepreneurial skills. Career-planning skills has inevitably made students to become more confident about making post-secondary choices with a firm understanding of the requirements needed to pursue professional and entrepreneurial paths for themselves. In the phase of this, school guidance counselors and school counseling researchers are also provided with a yardstick to constantly examine issues arising from the attempts by guidance counselors and school administrations to give entrepreneurial and professional visibility to students. The purpose of this is to identify areas of strengths, short comings and where more time could be devoted to improve their efforts.

Consequently, meeting school professional and career guidance requirements is a precondition to producing professionally and entrepreneurially skilled graduates, which could go a long way in solving the plaguing problem of graduate unemployment in our societies. The role of the school guidance counselor is therefore of paramount significance. According to Carrell and Carrell (2006), guidance counselors or school counselors are certified professionals employed by schools or academic institutions to assist and advise students about academic and personal decisions. They provide private counseling to students, assess the ability and potential of students, and coordinate with fellow professionals on student matters. Sink and Stroh (2003) posit that the major aim of Guidance Counseling Services is to encourage students' academic, social, emotional, professional and personal development. To reach this aim, Sklare (2005) underscores that guidance counseling services help students get to know themselves better and find effective solutions to their daily problems. They also help students improve themselves in all areas and be full-functioning individuals.

According to Bobga (2016), one of the principal roles of the school counselor is to guide students through educational counseling by empowering them towards resolving their study problems and developing survival skills that will help them succeed in school and at home. School counselors, like all educational professionals, are therefore increasingly being required to demonstrate evidence

of effective practice. Effectiveness is achieved when they are able to lead students not only towards success in their academic or educational, personal-social goals within a school milieu (Bama& Borokonda, 2019) but most importantly in developing all types of skills including entrepreneurial skills that will enable them cope in the challenging economic environments in which they find themselves. Therefore, improved performance, skills development, better career aspirations and greater personal-social adjustment is the hallmark of effectiveness in school counseling when educational counseling is employed (Lapan, Tucker, Kim & Kosciulek, 2003).

This paper thus examines the challenges of school counselors in enhancing students' entrepreneurial skills through school counseling and the way forward in improving counseling services for entrepreneurship skills development.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

One of the objectives of every secondary school guidance counseling program in Cameroon is to offer career and professional guidance to students, which is expected not only to help them make more informed decisions about their career lives post-secondary education, but most importantly inspire them to develop and enhanced hidden professional, career-planning and entrepreneurial skills. These skills could inevitably make them to become more confident about making choices with a firm understanding of the requirements needed to pursue professional and entrepreneurial paths for themselves. However, this appears not to be so. Despite the efforts being made by the government to curb youth unemployment and increase youth engagements in the country, unemployment rates amongst the youth in the country according to the World Bank (share of the labor force ages 15-24 without work but available for and seeking employment) stands at 6.46 percent. In the Bamenda municipality in particular, it is observed that most secondary school graduates and dropouts who are among this age group are presently experiencing high rate of poverty and unemployment. Even in the absent of employment opportunities from the state and other private employers of labour, these youths are unable to be self-employed or engaged in skillful entrepreneurial and income generating activities due to the lack of the relevant skills needed for these activities. This has led them to engage in antisocial behavior, become public nuisances and labour liabilities to the state and their communities, while others have been engaged into non-state armed groups and gangs to terrorize the region and their communities. While there are many factors that could account for this problem of unskilled secondary graduate and consequently youth unemployment, the role of the school guidance counseling programs in our secondary schools is put to test. Having passed through most of the secondary schools in the region, it is expected and believed that these youths ought to have been given the proper professional guidance that would enable them fit into the society during and after school. They are supposed to have been; given proper career and professional orientation on what to study in school and the professional opportunities attached, provided with the necessary information on available opportunities in society and also given proper placement in their study programs, which could have all enabled them to acquire hands-on and entrepreneurial skills to get them economically engaged even as students and upon graduation. But it would appear this has not been the case, given the disposition of these youths in the society today, who are completely void of the spirit of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. Preliminary interactions with some school counselors shows that the counselors are encountering a series of challenges to this effect which need to be examined in detail and a possible way forward earmarked for improvement.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Generally, the study was out to examine the challenges of and prospects for Secondary School Counselors in Bamenda Municipality in their attempt to enhance students' entrepreneurial skills

through school counseling. Specifically, the study was specifically guided by the following objectives:

- To examine the challenges faced by secondary school counselors in enhancing students entrepreneurship skills through counseling services.
- To find out the possible way forward towards the improvement of school counseling services for enhancing students' entrepreneurship skills.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITEERATURE

Educational counseling is viewed as the process of “assisting students to realize the maximum educational benefits to them by helping them to better understand themselves and to learn to use the resources of the institution to meet their special educational needs and aspirations” (Sharma, 2017). In the word of Jones (2014) the purpose of educational counseling program is to assist students in the development of meaningful educational and career goals. It assists students in developing educational plans consistent with their life goals and the society in which they find themselves. At the secondary school level, it provides orientation, information, placement, direction and other critical services with regards to students study programs, academic progress, career or professional opportunities and overall psychological and socio-emotional wellbeing for eventual success in and out of school. This is done through careful review of students' academic and educational backgrounds, needs, performance, and challenges (Akinboye, 2016).

It is assumed that students at secondary schools are within the age bracket of 12-20 years and therefore not mature enough to make decisions independently. Consequently, they might engage themselves in antisocial behaviors and negative peer influence that may interfere with their studies and disorient them in their academic and professional paths (Salawu & Abdulkadir, 2011 and Aina, 2013). Some students might not have been admitted into academic disciplines of their choice and therefore may find it difficult to create interest, concentrate and develop the necessary skills needed. Generally, students begin secondary education with limited knowledge and skills about career prospects related to the program they are enrolled (King, 1993). In addition, the job market is very dynamic and keeps on changing, unless students are able to get up to date information, orientation and placement, they will always encounter challenges developing the right skills and integrating into the job market after completion of their studies. Students who need to pursue further education also need information, orientation and placement services on available opportunities for the development of appropriate skills and subsequent professional integration and career advancement (Ezendu and Obi, 2013).

Theoretically, the study is anchored on John Holland's theory (1959) and Albert Bandura's (1977) social cognitive and Self efficacy Theory. Holland's theory (1959) is grounded on a model of personal orientation or a developmental process established through heredity and the individual's life history of reacting to environmental demands. More simply put, individuals are attracted to a particular occupation that meets their personal needs and provides them satisfaction.

Holland argues that personality is permanent, and he asserts that early life experience, self-perceptions and values influence the development of behaviors or personality. But his personality theory stresses that individuals are drawn to certain careers as a result of their personality. Holland postulated that vocational environments could be arranged into similar typologies. In the career choice and development process, people search for environments that would allow them to exercise their skills and abilities, and to express their attitudes and values. In any given vocational environment, there is a tendency to shape its composition so that its characteristics are like the dominant persons in there, and those who are dissimilar to the dominant types are likely to feel unfulfilled and dis- satisfied. This theory relates to the present study in that when students who are seeking entrepreneurial skills are provided with career counseling the counselor can help students

assess their interests, ability, potentials and understand the relationships between them. Simply developing a cognitive structure or framework for seeing themselves and their work is of great help to students. Some career counselors organize and reference their career and job information according to Holland type, using the three-point code corresponding to the type that stands out the most. This facilitates the process of meeting interest and the environment.

In 1977 Albert Bandura introduced his social-cognitive theory and self-efficacy theory, in which he theorized that people are likely to engage in activities to the extent that they perceive themselves to be competent. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997). Self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behavior, and social environment. One's sense of self-efficacy can provide the foundation for motivation, well-being, and personal accomplishment. People's beliefs in their efficacy are developed by four main sources of influence, including (i) mastery experiences, (ii) vicarious experiences, (iii) social persuasion, and (iv) emotional states. The theory relates to the present study in that students with study problems tend to have low self-efficacy and it is the goal of the counselor to build their self-efficacy so that they could develop strategies that help them overcome their study problems in school.

Contextually, the evolution of counseling in Cameroon schools has been shaped by multiple events. According to Ndongko and Tambo (2000), the development of counseling in Cameroon could be traced from 1945, with an in-service unit of counseling opened in the Public Works Department with its headquarters in Douala. This service was charged with the selection of executive staff, students and apprentices to undergo technical training. It however went through a series of changes in the name. For example, in 1949 this service was transformed by Decree No.49-4192 of 26th December 1949 to the Centre for Psychological Counseling and Vocational Choices. In 1963, in line with Decree No. 63/46 CDR of 16th August 1963, this unit of counseling became the Service for Vocational Guidance and Psychological Studies of Labour Problems. Ndongko and Tambo (2000) maintain that it was thus placed under the Secretariat for Labour and was linked to the Ministry of National Education, where it has up to this moment been well rooted. The responsibilities of this service included: carrying out psychological studies adapted to the orientation and vocational selection of individuals for the public sector, providing psycho-technical tests within competitive examinations, and enabling other ministries in recruitment of manpower.

The main focus of counseling in Cameroon has been to enable students understand and accept who they are so that their hidden talents can come to the limelight for them to use efficiently to make life worth living (Ngoran, 2007). The identity that was mutely provided to career counseling in 1963 was reinforced and enlarged during the life of the second 5-year development plan (1966-1971). By 1968, a guidance bureau was created within the planning service of the Ministry of National Education following Decree no. 68/DF/268 of 12th July 1968. The bureau received technical assistance from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Ngoran (2007) explains that following Decree No. 74/406 of 24th April 1974, a Department of Planning, Orientation and School Equipment was created with a Service of Counseling in the Ministry of Education. With increased awareness and need, the doors of the Department of Science of Education in the Ecole Normale Superieure (ENS) Yaoundé were opened to the admission of student counselors through a competitive entrance examination in 1982. This was in accordance with Decree No. 79/309 of August 1979.

Today, Ngoran (2013) avows that the country does not have only ENS Yaoundé training counselors for Cameroon schools, but there are equally many other teacher training colleges training a very significant number of counselors who have added to the number from ENS Yaoundé to bring an enormous change in the area of counseling in Cameroon. Counselors in Cameroon schools

nowadays receive training from higher teacher training colleges in Bambili, Kumba, Yaoundé, Douala, Maroua and more recently in Bertoua and Ebolowa. Ngoran (2013) says the number of counselors in Cameroon schools has steadily grown especially with the training of more counselors even though they are still not enough for all schools. The training process that lasts two or even three years in some training centers such as Douala equips the trainees with the necessary theoretical and practical skills necessary for effectiveness in the profession. Eligibility is based on possession of at least a Bachelor's degree in any field although of late, specific emphasis is placed on psychology-related domains. Admission is through competitive entrance examinations and graduates are absorbed as civil servants and deployed to public (government) secondary schools and universities.

Besides these public institutions, private universities in Cameroon have embraced counseling and are making giant strides. For example, the Catholic Church runs an intensive lay counseling programme in some parts of its archdiocese as is the case in Bamenda and Kumbo in the Northwest region (Ngoran, 2013). The National Polytechnique University Institute Bamenda also trains counselors at the Higher National Diploma (HND) and Bachelor's Degree levels. Recently, the government has started training counselors at the Master's and PhD levels in the Universities of Bamenda and Buea through the Faculties of Education. This gesture has been seen as a welcome move and has drawn attention to the importance government attaches to counseling especially in Cameroon schools.

METHODOLOGY

The study was a qualitative research that adopted the exploratory research design. The study area was Bamenda Municipality in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon. Bamenda is the metropolitan head quarter of the North West Region and is known for her exploits in the English and French subsystems of secondary education in the country. However, in the phase of the seven years long Anglophone crisis, the municipality has in the past years been plagued by high crime wave and a high rate of secondary school dropouts.

The accessible population for the study was made up of 105 school counselors in the public, lay private and confessional secondary and high schools within the Meropolis – that is Bamenda I, II and III (Regional Delegation for Secondary Education, 2023). 10 of the school counselors were purposively sampled because of their years of experience in the school counseling profession and the type of schools they work in within the municipality. The qualitative opinions of the 10 school counselors were gotten through an interview using a researcher developed Educational Counseling and Entrepreneurship Interview Guide (ECEIG). The researchers visited the selected schools prior to the data collection to discuss the process with the school administrators and how to help get the involvement of the sampled school counselors in order to facilitate the process. The researchers introduced themselves and their *raison d'être* and significance of the study, and ensured that all ethical considerations were followed before administering the ECEIG. Analyses of qualitative data collected through the ECEIG were done using thematic and descriptive narration, whereby the opinions of the school counselors were grouped in themes and interpreted through descriptive analyses/narration.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Objective 1: To examine the challenges faced by school counselors in enhancing students entrepreneurship skills through counseling services.

From the analyses of the interview, counselors identified some of their challenges to include; limited awareness of parents and students on the important of counseling services, limited time for practical clinical counseling diagnoses and practices and as a result, counseling in school is more of theory than practice. Moreover, there is the lack of counseling laboratories, reluctance by

professionals to visit schools to talk to children on entrepreneurship and students lack of interest in entrepreneurship related activities.

“...the fact that our students’ priority is academics limits their interest on issues concerning entrepreneurial counseling, so some pressure is needed to get them fully interested...” noted one of the counselors.

Another critical challenge according to the counselors is the inadequate means to develop students’ skills and the lack of funding in counseling research. Below are the direct words of three counselors on the challenges they encounter;

“...Students in their numbers have been noticed to have skills in them but the means to develop these skills is not there....there is lack of funding and other resources to support our effort...it is difficult getting reliable professionals to talk to the students...”

The above findings are thematically summarized and presented on table 1 below

Table 1: Thematic summary of findings on challenges faced by school counselors in enhancing students entrepreneurship skills through counseling services.

Category of variable	Description		
	Questioning theme	Response themes	Key statements of interviewees
Challenges of school counselors	Challenges encountered as school counselors in enhancing students’ entrepreneurial skills	<p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited time to carryout workshops - Inadequate means to develop students skills - Difficulties in bringing professionals to campus - Students lack interest in entrepreneurship - Lack of counseling laboratories - More of theory than practice in counseling - Lack of funding in counseling research - No time for practical activities on timetable - limited awareness of students and parents about counseling services 	<p>“...Students in their numbers have been noticed to have skills in them but the means to develop these skills is not there....there is lack of funding and other resources to support our effort...it is difficult getting reliable professionals to talk to the students...”</p> <p>“...the fact that our students’ priority is academics limits their interest on issues concerning entrepreneurial counseling, so some pressure is needed to get them fully interested...”</p>

Source: Fieldwork 2024

Objective 2: To find out the possible way forward towards the improvement of school counseling services for enhancing students’ entrepreneurship skills.

With regards to the possible way forward, the counselors earmarked the following suggestions; considering the challenge of inadequate school counselors in secondary schools around the Bamenda Metropolis, the counselors see the need for more school counselors to be trained in order to reduce the wide counselor-student ratio and bring it to standard. This is because students cannot be drilled and their entrepreneurial skills enhanced without the counselors who have key responsibilities for such tasks through students’ orientation, information provision and placement according to their areas of skills and strengths. This could be done through mandatory open days

where students are exposed to different career, professional and entrepreneurial orientations and placements from counselors and professionals invited by school authorities to motivate the students.

“...Mandatory open days where local entrepreneurs can be invited to talk to the students and partnerships established between schools and local entrepreneurs...Counselors and administration should work towards creating time to visit different entrepreneurial sectors and have internships with students to enhance their creativity and innovations...” two counselors noted.

Counselors also advocated the need for entrepreneurship to be made a compulsory subject in secondary skills and students be made to show prove of the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills as a precondition for graduating from secondary schools in the country.

“...entrepreneurial skills be encouraged in all secondary schools through the introduction of compulsory teaching of entrepreneurship...administrators and counselors should give group counseling to students to develop interest early enough in entrepreneurship...” two counselors advocated.

The schools counselors also saw the need for schools partnerships with local successful entrepreneurs and the introduction of student internship programs in secondary schools that will see students once or twice a year visit these successful entrepreneurs and their business institutions to acquire some practical lessons on entrepreneurship. These measures and more according to the counselors could possibly go a long way in enhancing the entrepreneurial skills of students. The table below presents a summary of the thematic analyses with regards to the above.

Table 1: Thematic summary of findings on possible way forward towards improving school counseling services for enhancing students’ entrepreneurship skills .

Category of variable	Description		
	Questioning theme	Response themes	Key statements of interviewees
Policy recommendations on wayward	Possible way forward towards the improvement of secondary school counseling services for enhancing students’ entrepreneurship skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide more time on timetable for students to visit entrepreneurial shops - Establish counseling labs and entrepreneurial workshops in schools - Entrepreneurship should be introduced as a compulsory subject - Train more counselors for schools - Counselors and Administrators should constantly orientate students on entrepreneurship - Introduce internships in secondary schools - Create mandatory open days in Secondary schools - schools partnerships with local successful entrepreneurs 	<p>“...Mandatory open days where local entrepreneurs can be invited to talk to the students and partnerships established between schools and local entrepreneurs...”</p> <p>“...Counselors and administration should work towards creating time to visit different entrepreneurial sectors and have internships with students to enhance their creativity and innovations...”</p> <p>“...suggesting that students be required to show prove of at least acquiring/being trained in a particular entrepreneurial skill before completing secondary school...”</p> <p>“...entrepreneurial skills be encouraged in all secondary schools through the introduction of compulsory teaching of</p>

			entrepreneurship...administrators and counselors should give group counseling to students to develop interest early enough in entrepreneurship.”
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Source: Field work 2024

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Challenges faced by secondary school counselors in enhancing students entrepreneurship skills through counseling services

With regards to the challenges faced by school counselors, the findings from interviews with counselors showed that counselor’s encounter challenges which include among others; limited awareness of parents and students on the important of counselling services, limited time for practical clinical counselling diagnoses and practices and as a result, counselling in school is more of theory than practice. Moreover, there is the lack of counselling laboratories, reluctance by professionals to visit schools to talk to children on entrepreneurship and students lack of interest in entrepreneurship related activities. There is also the challenge of inadequate means to develop students’ skills and the lack of funding in counselling research. Mapfumo and Nkoma, (2013) and Olusegun (2023) posit that little progress has been made in reaching the goals of school counselling services and this is because of the multiple challenges encountered by school counsellors in the administration of Guidance Counselling Service. Nyamwange et al (2012) and Mushaandja, et al (2013), support that not all students in school are willing to accept the advice given to them by counsellors, which can cause an obstruction in the way of the counselling process. According to them, learners are unwilling to disclose their problems and be counselled by the teacher counsellors, as they did not trust the services providers. This non-cooperation of clients as argued by the scholars may perhaps be due to negative attitudes towards guidance counselling, thus confirming with the views of counsellors in the interview that there is lack of interest and cooperation by students towards guidance and counselling services. Nyamwange et al (2012) also found out that lack of interest is not all about the students as secondary school head teachers and students in some cases both generally had a negative attitude towards guidance and counselling services. If school administrators do not have the right attitude towards counselling then there is no way counselling services can go well in such institutions. A negative attitude from leadership does not auger well for the provision of quality and effective counselling services in secondary schools.

Achieng (2007) and Boitt (2016) are also in line with the findings with regards to inadequate counselling facilities to ensure the effective and efficient provision of counselling services. Quality counselling services are often determined by the kind of facilities and resources made available to counsellors. Facilities and resources such as counselling laboratories, office space, bookshelves, finance, time, reference books, and guidance counselling manuals, psychological test materials and even school counselling personnel are critical to the provision of quality services. With regards to technology, most schools do not have access to technology and the necessary resources required to provide effective counselling services, particularly when such services have to do with the orientation, provision of information and the placement of counselees in appropriate programs towards entrepreneurship development. As Achieng argues, trying to separate school counselling from technology in the 21st century is to refuse effectiveness, as record keeping/transfer will be more tedious and unsafe, psychological tests and counselling appraisal will be slower and prone to errors, counsellors will lack access to online training resources for their own professional development and consequently clients’ improvement. Ngumi (2003) also notes that most educational institutions lacked trained counsellors, time, facilities and reference materials for use by counsellors. In similar findings, Anagbogu and Nwokolo (2010) revealed that necessities like

computers, training the counsellors in ICT, counselling clinics, radios, televisions, one-way mirrors, generators and furniture were lacking in many schools in Nigeria, thereby hampering the effective operations of school counsellors.

One of the key challenges expressed by the counsellors in the interview is the issue of inadequate funding. This is also confirmed in the findings of Kafwa (2005), Okere (2005), and Songok, et al, (2013). These scholars all argue that counsellors who enjoy adequate funding tend to be more confident, effective and productive because they make all necessary facilities available at their disposal. The inadequacy of funds remains a serious challenge facing the implementation of guidance counselling programs in developing countries, as most counselling programs are not properly funded. Owino and Odero (2014) observed that financial constraint is also a major challenge to counselling programs in primary schools in Kisumu, Kenya.

Possible way forward towards the improvement of secondary school counseling services for enhancing students' entrepreneurship skills

As for the possible way forward, the counselors suggested that; the challenge of inadequate school counselors in secondary schools around the Bamenda Metropolis could be solved through the training of more school counselors in order to reduce the wide counselor-student ratio and bring it to standard. It is evident that students cannot be drilled and their entrepreneurial skills enhanced without the counselors who have key responsibilities for such tasks through students' orientation, information provision and placement according to their areas of skills and strengths. There could also be mandatory open days where students are exposed to different career, professional and entrepreneurial orientations and placements from counselors and professionals invited by school authorities to motivate the students. The counselors also suggested that entrepreneurship be made a compulsory subject in secondary schools, and not only that, but students could be pushed towards showing proof of the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills as a precondition for graduating from secondary schools in the country. Finally, counselors also recommended strong partnerships between schools and successful local entrepreneurs, and the introduction of student internship programs that will see students once or twice a year visit the establishments of these entrepreneurs to acquire some practical lessons on entrepreneurship.

According to Olusegun (2023), overcoming the challenges faced by school counselors in enhancing students' entrepreneurial skills will require intentional and genuine efforts from the Ministries of Education particular within Africa, school administrators, school counselors and school guidance personnel, school guidance committees, parents and local community stakeholders including established entrepreneurs. Ivowi (2006), Mohammed and Funtua (2009) and Akani (2011) have identified some strategies that could be used in the development and enhancement of students' entrepreneurship skills in schools. These strategies include among others; organizing seminars, workshops and internship programs for students; engaging in practical counseling services on entrepreneurship and skill acquisition for students; and providing opportunities and granting soft loans to graduates that could enable them start up small business ventures using the entrepreneurship knowledge acquired in school. In addition to the above, other essential strategies necessary for ensuring effective entrepreneurial skills development and enhancement in students include; motivation and encouragement of students by teachers and school counselors towards developing interest in entrepreneurship. This could be done by providing a student-friendly environment to the students, displaying a role model attitude towards students, exposing them to challenging opportunities and providing times for exploration through excursions and internships (Wilfred-Bonse and Sam-Ngwu, 2014).

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