

## **Marginalisation of Exceptional Children in the Provision of Career Guidance and Counselling Services in Schools in Masvingo District, Zimbabwe**

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of this study was to explore the extent at which career guidance and counselling is provided to exceptional pupils in Masvingo District of Zimbabwe. It is a fact that exceptional children have been marginalized in a wide variety of educational service provision. The study therefore sought to explore whether exceptional children are also not being marginalized in the provision of career services as much as they have been marginalized in other areas. The research employed qualitative exploratory survey research design. The target population for this study included all special schools and schools with resource units in Masvingo District, together with officers from Schools Psychological Services and Special Needs Education Masvingo Provincial Office. The research indicated that service providers have generally low expectations on the career development of exceptional children. As a result of these low expectations, it was found out that career transition planning and assistance for special children is minimal at the very least. In keeping with these low expectations, it was found out that there were no specialist human resources dedicated to providing career counselling, and that only teachers are much more involved in this endeavour but they have minimal training to provide a satisfactory career counselling service. The research proposes that in the short term teachers be trained to provide efficient career counselling services. In the medium and long term, government should provide resources so that Schools Psychologists are capacitated so that they get involved in vocational assessment and career counselling of exceptional children. Lastly further research on the provision of career counselling for exceptional children should be carried out at a larger scale with a bigger, more representative sample and possibly employing both quantitative and qualitative research methods.*

**Keywords:** *Exceptional Children, Marginalization, Career Counselling, Masvingo, Zimbabwe*

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### **I. Background To The Study**

Prior to independence, Guidance and Counselling was offered to the Department of Coloured, Asian and European Education and not to the Department of African Education. However, in the 1970s an attempt was made to introduce a subject to prepare the African child for the ever changing world (Mhlanga, 2010). Education for living was therefore introduced to make the school leaver aware of issues such as banking, hire purchase etc. In 1979, the advent of Zimbabwe Rhodesia heralded the fusion of the two departments of education. Between 1979 and 1980 consultations took place between the ministry and the two teacher organizations, the National Teachers' Association (formerly Rhodesian Teachers' Association) and the Zimbabwe Teachers' Association (ZIMTA) formerly the Rhodesia African Teachers' Association (RATA) to decide on harmonizing the two systems. These consultations saw the demise of education for living and the dawn of Guidance and Counselling (Mhlanga 2010).

It is important to note that the aforementioned guidance and counselling was generally meant for the regular school child. For the special needs child, Chitiyo and Wheeler (2004) point out that until 1980, there was no national policy on Special Education in Zimbabwe. The education of children with special needs was provided by charitable organizations and churches (Peresuh and Barcham, 1998) cited by Chitiyo and Wheeler (2004). Children with special needs were usually placed in rural boarding schools or institutions where they were taught practical skills such as basketry, woodwork, leatherwork sewing and cookery. Missionaries and Humanitarian organizations like Jairos Jiri Association and the Council for the Blind considered it more as a moral and religious obligation than a right for the children to receive an education (Peresuh and Barcham, 1998) cited by Chitiyo and Wheeler (2004). As such there was typically no coordination at all in the services offered to these children, and therefore no meaningful guidance and counselling was offered to these exceptional children. Guidance and counselling has three dimensions which are: Social Guidance, Educational Guidance and Career Guidance (Herr, Cramer and Niles, 2004). The later provides enlightenment to pupils about the career paths open to them at the end of each educational route. However, there are noted problems with provision of adequate guidance and counselling services. The problems emanate largely from the lack of clear policy. In this case the

Secretary's Circular Number 3 of 2002 states in ambiguous terms that Guidance and Counselling is compulsory. As part of guidance and counselling, career guidance and counselling is erratically provided to children in our regular schools in general and to children with special needs in particular largely because of the noted lack of clear policy.

Career development is generally important to children, youth and adults in the anticipation of planning for, preparation for and implementation of work (Herr et al, 2004). For many students, the postsecondary planning process is a significant part of their junior and senior years in high school. While the career planning process for general students has become more challenging, the process for students with disabilities has become exponentially more complex. It is therefore critical that students with disabilities receive the same support, counselling and encouragement when it comes to postsecondary school planning (Griffin, 2010). However, the major question concerning these aspects of human resources development and particularly career services in any nation including Zimbabwe have to do with the accessibility of such services, their purposes, to whom they will be available, and who will deliver them (Herr et al, 2004).

In the light of the above questions, various reports have shown lower participation levels and significant inequality between people with disabilities and others in a wide range of areas including career guidance and counselling (Fitzgerald, 2005; Gannon and Nolan, 2005) cited by NDA-2012. Exceptional children and youths are those who require special education and related services if they are to realize their full human potential. They require special education and related services like career guidance and counselling because they are markedly different from most children in one or more of the following ways: they may have mental retardation, learning disabilities, emotional or behavioural disorders, physical disabilities, disorders of communication, autism, traumatic brain injury, impaired hearing, impaired sight etc (Hallahan and Kauffman, 1997). However, these people face problems in accessing these essential support services largely as a result of society's discrimination (Hallahan and Kauffman, 1997).

Lack of career guidance and counselling services can be said to be affecting the generality of the school going population. However, it should be noted that this lack may be much more pronounced among children with special needs. As the United Nations notes, children who live with a physical, sensory, intellectual or mental disability are among the most stigmatized and marginalized of all the world's children (UNICEF, 2005). According to a study by the Rochester Institute of Technology (2011), the incidence of Maltreatment, including neglect and emotional abuse, is more than 25% higher among deaf and hard of hearing children than among hearing youths. In addition, society devalues and disempowers disabled people. Society's attitude leads to a created vulnerability. Lack of appropriate or poorly coordinated support services can leave disabled children and their families unsupported and physically and socially isolated (Miller, 2002). Therefore the aforesaid aspect of stigmatization and isolation may as well lead to starving off of children with disabilities of essential support services like career guidance and counselling. This lack may be indicated by very negligible figures of persons with disabilities in the income generating sectors of employment. To substantiate this assertion, Herr et al (2004) observed that there is employer discrimination and prejudice towards persons with disabilities. These employers' attitudes largely reflect those of the public in general.

### **Statement Of The Problem**

Children who have special needs are among the most stigmatized and marginalized of all the world's children. These exceptional individuals are presumed to be the victims of considerable prejudice and marginalization by potential employers and possible bias by counsellors and teachers. Moreover, policy on special education provision in Zimbabwe is ambiguous which worsens these children's discrimination. Because of this bias, exceptional children are not being given attention when it comes to career guidance and counselling. This poses a problem in that exceptional children may have lower levels of career decision making, lower levels of self-efficacy and may be more pessimistic in their attributional style for career decision making than their peers without disabilities. The ideal scenario would be to have exceptional children included in career education. These children need career education as much as, or even more than regular education students.

## **II. Methodology**

### **Design**

A qualitative approach to the study was preferred due to its flexibility and the fact that it allows for a systematic collection of data by penetrating a society that may otherwise be deemed to be inaccessible (Milingo, 1999) cited by Nherera (ed) 1999. A qualitative approach was also preferred because traditionally most of the research techniques in the study of career counselling derive from a positivist, quantitative, empirical tradition. Growing concerns, however, that such linear, quantitative and hypothetico-deductive approaches are failing to capture adequately the richness and complexity of the interaction of individual and contextual factors, human action, consciousness, and agency and the multi-probabilistic dynamics of career development (Polkinghorne, 1984, Manicas and Secord, 1983) cited by Herr et al (2004) led to the adoption of a qualitative

approach. The research specifically employed an exploratory survey research design. Exploratory studies are also termed as formative research studies. The main purpose of such studies is that of formulating a problem for more precise investigation or for developing the hypothesis from an operational point of view.

### **Participants and Setting**

A total of seven participants were purposively selected from one special school, two primary schools with resource units in Masvingo district and also from the Provincial office's section of Schools Psychological Service and Special Needs Education. From the primary schools, two participants from each school (the headmaster and the teacher responsible for the resource unit) were selected for this research. From the special school two participants were also selected ( the headmaster and the teacher in charge of skills development workshop). Lastly from the SPS/SNE section of the provincial education office, the head of the section was selected. These researchers were selected because the researcher felt that they were information rich sources.

### **Instrumentation**

The research employed an interview method of data collection. In the selection of the interview method to use, financial constraints were factored in. Therefore personal (face-to-face) interviews were used first because they are cheaper than say mail or telephone interviews (surveys). Overall response rates of face to face interviews were frequently better (Burton, 2000). Collecting data by using telephone or mail surveys takes less time than most other methods, but the preferred face to face surveys frequently provided higher quality data (Burton, 2000). Face to face interviews were perhaps the most sociable way to collect survey data, unlike telephone surveys and self-administered questionnaires because the researcher at least managed to see the respondents. Face to face interviews are probably the most effective way of enlisting the cooperation of most populations and in this respect the researcher faced very few problems in respect of cooperation by respondents.

### **Procedure**

A research instrument (interview schedule) was designed and pilot tested at Mashaba Primary school with two respondents (special class teacher and the headmaster). This served to sharpen the instrument. The researcher then sought permission from the Masvingo District Education office to conduct a research in schools in the district. When permission was granted the researcher went to the respective schools where appointments were fixed with the headmaster and the respective teachers. For the interview that was done with the Provincial Schools Psychological Service official, permission was sought from the Provincial Education Director (Masvingo) as a matter of protocol. For interviews with teachers, permission was granted by the headmaster. After fixing appointments the researcher then came back on the appointed dates and times to conduct the interviews. During the time when appointments were fixed, the researcher took his time to explain the purpose and importance of the research. It was also explained that the research was for academic purposes and that privacy and confidentiality was assured.

## **III. Data Presentation And Analysis**

“The challenge is to make sense of massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal” (Patton, 1990) cited by Best and Kahn (1993). Best and Kahn also say that, the first step in analysing qualitative research involves organizing the data. Qualitative research often results in voluminous notes from observations, interviews and/or documents. Therefore to analyse the data collected through the interviews, the qualitative content analysis technique was employed. The determination of the analytical categories began with an intensive and repeated reading of the material. The aim was to note, for every interview transcript, individual aspects of the topics which could be related to the context of the research questions. The interview protocols were analysed inspired by the content analysis method. Here the open coding process was used where the interviews were analysed line by line and broken down into segments reflecting the substance of the data, that is use of substantive codes. Codes with the same content were grouped together to form more abstract categories (Coolican, 2008). The goal of qualitative content analysis was the systematic examination of communicative material. The communicative material was recorded in text form (i.e transcribed). The content analysis did not only target the content of verbal material, but both formal aspects and latent meaning, and also objects of the study. The content analysis procedure used was specifically the summarizing content analysis procedure (Mayring, 2004) cited by Flick et al (2004). This sought to reduce the material in such a way that the essential contents were preserved, but a manageable short text was produced. The findings arising from this analysis are presented in the next section.

### **Expectations on the vocational progress of exceptional children**

On the level of expectations on the vocational progress of students with special needs, it was noticed that there was a mixed bag of perceptions and perspectives. The majority had low expectations whilst others had relatively high expectations. The following are excerpts of the respondents describing their expectations on the progress of special needs children:

I expect exceptional children to progress academically and vocationally. My expectations is that these children grow to be self-empowered, integrated into society, be independent and be self-sufficient economically. My positive expectations of these children can be supported by the effort that I am taking together with the headmaster of Henry Murray to help out student who is hearing impaired to advance academically and be trained as a pastor. This student was top of her class in hair dressing.

My expectations are that our graduands progress to become shop and office cleaners especially girls. I expect boys to become assistant carpenters, assistant welders and assistant gardeners. I also expect our boys and girls to progress and become shop packers and also become cleaners at our schools.

Our exceptional children may have difficulties in adjusting to the world of work, so I would at the most expect them to mature and be in a position to clean and clothe themselves (self-grooming) and in addition be in a position to clean their own environment.

The above excerpts reveal that the people who are service providers to exceptional children have both high and low expectations on the vocational progress of children with special needs.

### **Career transition planning and assistance for exceptional students.**

Under this aspect, participants revealed that career transition planning and assistance to exceptional children is provided at a superficial level especially to the blind and usually covered under life skills for the mentally retarded. The following vignettes demonstrate the participants' experience in the provision of career planning and assistance to exceptional students:

To a certain extent I would say yes, career transition planning and assistance is provided to exceptional children. For example to the visually impaired, it makes sense because we have over 50 visually impaired who are University graduates.

To the hearing impaired, vocational training is provided and career guidance provided with the hope that their skills would be used in industry as assistant carpenters, assistant welders, assistant gardeners.

For those with mental retardation, career transition planning is provided under life skills training, but here the emphasis is on the mentally retarded's adaptive skills not their vocational guidance because the range of careers for them is limited.

Career counselling and guidance is provided by all teachers in class, sometimes during clubs (in the extra mural activities). Generally I can say counselling is provided by everyone from ancillary staff, the bursar, to the workshop instructors. This is because counselling is an ongoing thing. Even on Mondays, and Fridays, counselling is offered during assembly times.

There is no career counselling because it is considered that some of these exceptional children's memories are poor such that they are not expected to retain anything in their heads especially this one girl who is autistic. You can notice that even when you try to teach her something in terms of functional literacy, she cannot retain that for long, so giving her career counselling will be a waste of time since she is not expected to progress beyond grooming herself and cleaning her environment.

Career guidance and counselling for the hearing impaired is limited in scope because their career paths are considered to be narrow, for example there is no known person with hearing impairment who has graduated from any tertiary institution.

### **Goals of career counselling.**

The emerging pattern is that the goals of career counselling are that of providing information to exceptional children so that they realize that despite their condition they could still find something to do in life. The following excerpts reflect the goals of career counselling:

By giving exceptional students career guidance I hope to make them realize that despite their condition, they can still work, at least as assistant shop keepers and cleaners and be independent and self-sufficient financially.

Career counselling is essential to provide information on the range of careers available to special needs students, for example they are informed that they can be packers in supermarkets.

### **Level of education where career guidance is introduced**

The major view which emerged here is that career guidance and counselling is provided late into a child's educational life. In addition not all students participate in careers day, for example, only 10 students are drawn from each school at secondary level but students from primary schools are not involved in these career

counselling program. The following verbal quotes illustrate the level of education when career education is introduced:

The concept of career guidance and counselling is prevalent in secondary schools especially from form 3 to form 6. Of course in the 1990s one education officer responsible for guidance and counseling tried to introduce this concept at primary level for grade 6 and grade 7 but this did not go very far. It was mainly affected by economic problems such that even in the said secondary schools career guidance was rarely witnessed.

In the primary schools guidance and counselling is covered under life skills and is delivered by the class teacher. The problem however is that children at primary level are largely considered young, naive and immature, so teachers do not take offering career counselling to these children important even during the life skills training.

### **Career services delivery mode**

Findings indicate that the most general and popular career services delivery mode in Masvingo is the career's day but exceptional children are not meaningfully participating in this. The most common career services delivery mode to special needs children was found to be group career counselling in the respective special schools' assembly times, and in the special units. Rarely was individual counselling used. The following verbal quotes illustrate the experience of participants:

Career days are organized once annually per every district but children with special needs do not participate meaningfully. The problem is that exceptional students like those who are visually impaired may be having self-handicapping beliefs and therefore would not deem it necessary to participate in career days. In addition the problem might also be that there is lack of Braille material to cater for these exceptional people in terms of handouts during career days and for the hearing impaired there are no interpreters to assist them, so they would not bother to participate because they feel they won't benefit from such fora.

Teachers in special schools and resource units feel that career counselling provided to general/ regular education students does not cater for exceptional students because the organizers and presenters do not understand special needs issues so why bother participating.

Career guidance and counselling is delivered to students during assembly times on Mondays and Fridays. In addition counselling is also provided by class teachers in class and in workshops by workshop instructors.

### **Who is involved in career guidance of exceptional students?**

Findings indicate that the parties involved in the career guidance and counselling are very few. The indication is that teachers are the ones with the sole responsibility of providing career guidance and counselling to exceptional students. The following vignettes highlight the breadth and width of the parties involved in the provision of career services to exceptional pupils:

Parents' involvement in career counselling is limited. The only visible participation of parents and guardians is when they bring their exceptional children for assessment and then going with the child to where placement has been recommended by the schools psychologist.

It would be good to involve trade unions in career guidance and counselling especially during career days but the problem is the career days are handled by two ministries, that is Ministry of Labour and then our parent Ministry of Education. The problem may be that there is no proper coordination in the conduct of career days between the two ministries, so we end up having no trade unions invited. The other problem might be that of politics. In this case the organizers might be afraid of calling for the participation of some trade unions like ZCTU which are perceived to be pro-MDC therefore it may be deemed risky by organizers to call these. There are no people with disabilities participating in career guidance and counselling services as role models because there are few of these in our schools. The problem started with the advent of economic problems when government could not hire more people with special needs to work as teachers or counsellors because these were proving to be expensive since they needed assistance to deliver.

Teachers baby sit the task of guidance and counselling both in classrooms and during assembly times especially Mondays and Fridays.

### **Personnel training for service providers**

Findings established that training of personnel involved in career guidance delivery is not adequate and definitely less satisfactory. The following are illustrative quotes from the respondents:

Career counselling is provided by us teachers who are not adequately trained. The only training that we have received especially we teachers in special schools is on life skills and HIV and AIDS education. This training was provided by the National AIDS Council (NAC) so that we could be in a position to offer life skills

training to our special needs children together with HIV and AIDS education. However, on career counselling, the knowledge and training that we have is very limited.

Career guidance services are offered by class teachers in the primary schools, and is offered under life skills training. At this primary level, the situation is better because the primary school teachers have a bit of some training from college where they covered the course under general guidance and counselling. However, for secondary schools, the situation is bad because secondary school teachers did not receive any career guidance and counselling training in college whatsoever. In the secondary schools, any teacher, whether a mathematics or science specialist teacher, can be tasked with providing career guidance and counselling.

#### **Involvement of schools psychologists in career guidance of exceptional students**

Indications from the study point to the fact that schools psychologists are not meaningfully assisting in the provision of career guidance and counselling services of exceptional children. The participation of psychologists is only limited to organizing career days of which special needs children do not meaningfully participate. Their noted participation in terms of special needs education is in the assessment and placement of these exceptional students. Even vocational assessment is not done by these psychologists. The following verbal quotes illustrate this:

The only notable participation by offices from the schools psychological services is in the assessment of exceptional children who would have been referred to them by teachers and parents. After assessments, they generate reports that would give recommendations for appropriate placement. Therefore I can safely say that their participation is in the general education of exceptional children not their career education.

As educational psychologists we only participate in the assessment of children who are referred to us and also preparing reports recommending placements. We are also involved in organizing the annual careers day.

Schools psychologists are not conducting any vocational assessments to exceptional children. The only assessment done is that by the Education officer Guidance and counselling. This assessment by the E.O (G & C) is in terms of assessing general education needs in special education, for example the availability of materials/resources for skills training in special schools. The reason why Educational psychologists are not participating may be because of lack of resources for example transport to come to schools since they no longer have a vehicle for their department.

#### **IV. Discussion**

Findings of the study indicated that the majority of respondents had low expectations on the vocational progress of special needs children. Some of the respondents indicated that they do not expect these exceptional children to do anything beyond being able to clean themselves and their environment. These results support findings by Kenny et al (2000) who said that in some cases, teacher expectations of what a young person with disabilities could achieve were deemed to be too low. Low expectations can have a negative effect on young people's own perception of their abilities.

It emerged from this study that career transition planning for exceptional students is provided at a very low level mainly to students who are hearing impaired than to those with other disabilities. For students who are mentally retarded, career counselling is covered under life skills training but as something that is subsidiary not core. This confirms research by Allen (2007) who said that one of the remaining challenges for full integration of general and special education programs for special education students is the full implementation of career education programs into the curriculum for all children. The finding that life skills training is core for mentally retarded children is in agreement with Maslow's needs theory as operationalised by Lassiter (1981). Here Lassiter talks of the importance of physiological needs to exceptional children, for example the need to accept responsibility for personal hygiene like attending to toilet and other personal needs; learning to care for his/her body and avoid absenteeism.

Previous studies have shown that the goals of post-secondary school planning for exceptional students should be to educate students and families regarding issues such as conducting the college search; testing; career guidance; application procedures; essay preparation and interviews (Griffin, 2010). In addition Griffin says that students with disabilities may experience difficulties in the process of post-secondary school planning and therefore need access to critical information and guidance related to options, programs and procedures. This is partly supported in the present study which revealed that the goals of career counselling is to provide information to exceptional students so that they realize that despite their condition they have something in store for them though limited.

One major finding of this study was that career guidance and counselling is provided late into the exceptional child's educational life, for example it is provided almost exclusively to secondary school students who are in form three to form six. This result opposes Allen's 2007 recommendations from his research. Allen recommended that special education students must be included in the mainstream of career counselling and

career development programs from kindergarten through twelfth grade. In addition these findings indicate a violation of The Education of All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142) cited in Herr et al (2004). PL 94-142 says that no later than 9<sup>th</sup> grade, schools must provide students and their parents with information about occupational education opportunities for students with handicapping conditions.

Results suggest that the most common career services delivery mode to special needs children was group counselling provided during assembly times in special schools and in classrooms during life skills training lessons in both special schools and resource units. Exceptional students were found not participating in careers day and individual counselling was rarely used with this group. This confirms results of a survey conducted by Collins (1998) cited by Herr et al (2004) who found that four out of five career centres provided group oriented career counselling interventions and workshops. However, these findings dispute those by Oliver and Spokane (1998) cited by Herr et al (2004) who said that individual career counselling continues to be at the centre of most programs of career guidance or career services in higher education. An important explanation for the primacy often given to individual career counselling is that it is effective. The probable explanation for the difference with the latter research is that individual counselling is not preferred because it is expensive in terms of time and money and the teachers may not have the requisite time and resources to counsel these students individually. The other reason might be that teachers maybe considering that these children do not have much future in terms of their career progress, so why bother offering individual career counselling.

Findings indicate that teachers are the ones with the sole responsibility of providing career guidance and counselling to exceptional students. This finding shows a violation of Rule 3 of The United Nations Standard Rules (1993) which stipulate that persons with disabilities and their families should be encouraged to involve themselves in rehabilitation, for instance, as trained teachers, instructors or counsellors. In addition these current findings are also indicating a violation of the Salamanca Statement by UNESCO (1994) which says special needs children require opportunities to interact with adults with disabilities who have achieved success so that they can pattern their own lifestyles and aspirations on realistic expectations. Education systems should therefore seek to recruit qualified teachers with and other educational personnel who have disabilities and also seek to involve successful individuals with disabilities from within the region in the education of special needs children. The explanation for these violations could be found from the fact that successful individuals with disabilities are not very much visible in Masvingo. In addition the problem may also be emanating from the fact that recruiting persons with disabilities may mean extra cost to the government of which the government has limited resources because of the current economic problems.

Results suggest that training of personnel involved in career guidance services is not adequate. These findings confirm findings by Chimanyiwa et al (2010) who found that ordinary school heads face problems in the recruitment of specialist teachers compared to special schools. The former heads indicated that the shortage of trained specialist teachers and refusal to take special classes by the trained teachers are some of the challenges they are facing. These results indicate a violation of the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) which state that appropriate preparation of all educational personnel stands out as a key factor in promoting progress towards inclusive schools. In addition, these findings also show a violation of Rule 19 of The United Nations Standard Rules (UN, 1993) which states that nations are responsible for ensuring the adequate training of personnel, at all levels, involved in the planning and provision of programs and services concerning persons with disabilities. States should ensure that all authorities providing services in the disability field give adequate training to their personnel.

It was established from the study that schools psychologists are not meaningfully assisting in the provision of career guidance and counselling services of exceptional children. In addition schools psychologists were found to be not conducting vocational assessments of exceptional students. These findings indicate a violation of The Education of All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142) which require that school districts conduct vocational assessments for students with handicapping conditions in occupational education programs. These assessments must include the identification of vocational interests, abilities, and special needs in relation to each student's specific handicapping condition. A comprehensive assessment usually results in a report that includes an evaluation of occupational interests, vocational strengths and weaknesses, learning style, language proficiency, recommendations for occupational program placement and or exploration, modification or support services required (Herr et al, 2004).

## **V. Conclusion**

Parties involved in the provision of career services have very low expectations in terms of vocational progress of exceptional students. Because of these low expectations, it can therefore be reasoned that career services are provided at a very low level since not much is expected to be achieved vocationally by exceptional students. The minimal career services provided have the goals of providing information but albeit information to the effect that these students can work but in low level jobs like being assistants in welding, carpentry etc or being cleaners and packers which is in keeping with the low expectations. Career services are provided late into

exceptional students' life and where they are provided the group career counselling mode which is not very effective is employed.

Teachers are the sole providers of career services to students with special needs. This makes it problematic because teachers are not well trained for that task. In addition schools psychologists are not active in the provision of career services and this leaves this researcher with no option but to come to the conclusion that career counselling of special needs children is not considered important by these parties thereby worsening the plight of these students who are already generally marginalized.

In the light of the above conclusion, this study recommends the following: Since the teachers have been observed to be the ones deeply involved with counselling of special needs children, they need to be provided with training on how to conduct effective counselling since they are less trained in this area. This may prove to be a short term stop gap measure. A medium term measure would be to have school psychologists involved in career counselling and vocational assessment of exceptional students. The involvement of schools psychologists should not stop with assessment for special needs, report writing and recommendation for placement, but should go a step further and provide career education and related services for these special children. Government must provide resources to the Schools Psychological Services so that the staff are able to make follow up on exceptional students evaluate their progress, provide vocational assessment and career guidance. In this respect provision of transport for the SPS section would go a long way in dealing with the issue of provision of these services to exceptional students. Government must also facilitate employment of people with disabilities as teachers and counsellors to provide role models to children with disabilities. Lastly, since the sample used was too small to allow for generalization, further research on this aspect of career counselling for exceptional students should be carried out at a larger scale with a bigger, more representative sample and possibly employing both quantitative and qualitative methods.

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