

Societal Influence on Vocational Career Choice among Senior Secondary School Students for National Development

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Abstract

The study focused on the societal influence on vocational career choice of senior secondary school students in Afijio Local Government Oyo, Oyo State. To achieve the objectives of the study, two research questions were developed and answered while one null hypothesis guided the study. The study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study consists of 1500 secondary school students in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State. 120 respondents were sampled using a simple random sampling technique. Data was collected through a self-designed questionnaire. The instrument was validated by three research experts and subjected to a reliability test, and a coefficient of 0.82 was obtained. This showed that the instrument is highly reliable. The questionnaire was administered to 120 respondents, and all the instruments were retrieved and subjected to the analysis. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions while t-test statistics were used to test hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that parent and peer groups have influence on the vocational career choice of secondary school students. Based on these findings, it is recommended among others that, though parental involvement in career is important but is good to consider the interest and ability of the students before asking them to choose any career and the school management need to start giving proper orientation to the students so as to them in selecting appropriate career and this could be achieved through the school counsellor.

Key Words: Societal Influence, Vocational, Career Choice.

Introduction

The goal of every individuals is to create a comfortable life for his or herself. The attainment of this aim is a function of a right selection of career choice. According to Datar and Ahmad (2019), poor career choices constitute poor quality of life as indicated by unemployment and maladjustment in various fields of endeavor. Thus the issue of career choice among students has become newsworthy among researchers, as it has drawn a lot of attention among parents, teachers, educational administrators and significant others among others.

Hence, it is needful to channel students into suitable careers (Capuzzi & Stauffer, 2012). Career refers to the wide-ranging activities of a person in the course of life (Omeje, 2007). It encompasses chains of similar occupations, vocations, job positions, engaged by an individual

from cradle to grave or from one educational level to another throughout his life (Omeje, 2007). This suggests that career is progressive. Sear (2011) defined career as an interface of occupations involving functions performed by an individual which may or may not attract any remuneration. The author stated further that individuals construct career patterns as decisions are made about learning, occupation, home and other roles in the course of existence. Maxwell and Okwulehie (2019) submitted that a career is a lifetime pursuit of success that encompasses major positions occupied by a person throughout one's lifetime. Thus the real meaning of who the individual is will largely depend on what the individual wants to do with one's occupational life.

Career choice is an indispensable decision made by adolescents as they progress in high school. While this decision process starts early for some adolescents from enriched environment the process comes late for some other adolescents who could not come to terms with themselves as a sequel to inability to identify what they would like to become in future. Obviously, making career decision is predicated on information at the disposal of the adolescent. Indeed, a multiplicity of internal and external variables could combine to fast track or delay the career decisions by adolescents. According to Alutu (2017) career refers to a person's professional course or an occupation which he/she has to follow over a number of years, affording him/her the opportunity for progress as well as serving as his principal means of earning a living and in which he/she is generally recognized to have become fairly an expert in, through experience.

The career of a person plays an important role in his entire life. Denga (2015) stated that a person's social status, income, style of life, his choice of friends, his mental and physical health are influenced by the type of job he does. Career choice is a developmental process spanning almost throughout a person's life time. In view of the importance of career choice and its enduring effects on one's life, it is important therefore to note that, the role that parents' socio-economic status plays in their children's choice of career help in vocational education.

A lot of secondary student nowadays seems to be facing difficulties in choosing vocational careers themselves, these problems have been for a long time most especially among the Nigerian youths. It is very common to ask a secondary school students what vocation or profession he/she may likely choose and find him/her giving an uncertain answer. It is also a fact that students' subject preferences and career choice are highly influenced by certain factors. According to Ahuja (2017), factors that may influence career could be classified into social and structural influences and these can inform career choices positively or negatively. Social influences are biases that inform internal and external perception of individuals. Gender stereotyping, role models, peers, media and parents are examples of social influences. Structural influences are manifested in the institutional support available such as teachers and counsellors, access to technology, and same-sex versus co-educational schools. While both

social and structural factors can influence decisions about career choice, adolescents' perceptions are mostly influenced by social factors such as parent, peers and role models, prestige and job lucrativeness.

Parents serve as a major influence in their children's career development and career decision-making. Parents want their children to find happiness and success in life and one factor which influences happiness and success is career choice. Research also indicates that when students feel supported and loved by their parents, they have more confidence in their own ability to research careers and to choose a career that would be interesting and exciting. This is important because studies show that adolescents, who feel competent regarding career decision-making, tend to make more satisfying career choices later in life. Parents influence the level of education or training that their children achieve; the knowledge they have about work and different occupations; the beliefs and attitudes they have to working; and the motivation they have to succeed. Most of this is learned unconsciously children and teenagers absorb their parent's attitudes and expectations of them as they grow up (Keller 2014).

In choosing a career, it is expedient and important to know how learners develop their preferences for one occupation or the other, and how these preferences are come to reality. Parents, teachers, and counsellors ought to be familiar with major factors which influence career development of individuals. This is necessary because career theorist believe that individuals have certain abilities, interest, personality traits and other characteristics that bring out one's vocational career choice. It is thus believed by professionals that if these characteristics are known together with their potentials values, and where on the job market these values can be put into appropriate uses, the individual is more likely to become a happier person and more useful citizen. In other words, knowing oneself and knowing the career opportunities available or existing in one's environment can help an individual make a good career adjustment. This then confirm to the fact that self-knowledge and occupational knowledge are cogent points of ensuring a relatively accurate and sum-up occupational decision towards career choice.

Maus (2003) explained that when an individual makes vocational choice, he or she does so in relation to the understanding of himself or herself. More so, psychologically vocational career choices are "drives" by self-concepts. What this means is that making satisfying career choices requires a good understanding of self. It also follows that understanding self is the key in making a successful vocational career choice. But it is also important, however, for one to know the requirements and work activities of different occupations. Super Donald believes that if knowledge of any occupation or its demand is faulty, that occupation is not going to be well evaluated in relation to one's self concept.

Another theory of relevance is Holland's theory of vocational choice which is also referred to as Holland's Career Typology (Holland 1959 quoted in Holland 1997). This theory is grounded in what he calls modal personal orientation or developmental process established through heredity and the individual's life history or reacting to environmental factors. This is to say that individuals are allocated to a particular occupation that meets their personal needs and provides them satisfaction.

According to Oladele (2017) in Holland (1959) builds the theory on the premises that a choice of career is an expression of an individual's personality, and that members of a vocation have similar personality and common histories of personal development. Holland thus suggests that career-seeking behaviour is an outgrowth of efforts to effect and match an individual's characteristics with those of a specific occupational field. Hence, by choosing a particular occupation an individual projects into one of his preferred life-style as a result of his or her view of himself and that of the world of work. To Holland therefore, the congruence between individuals' personality and the environment in which he works then becomes a determiner of vocational satisfaction, stability and achievement. The theory further maintains that for an occupational choice to be appropriate, the individual must have accurate self-knowledge, accurate self-evaluation and accurate occupational knowledge.

Middleton and Loughhead (1993) commented on how parents can be an important and positive influence in decisions affecting a young person's vocational development. Though they also warn that over-involvement in the decision-making process can undermine parental effects as a positive source of influence. Excessive parental control regarding adolescents' occupational decision-making results in negative outcomes. Parents should be cautioned against imposing their own goals on to their children or seeing their child's accomplishments as a reflection on themselves. So while parents should show genuine interest and support for their adolescents' career plans, they must allow adolescents to discover who they are on their own. Some teenagers fear the disapproval of their parents if they pursue a career in art/drama/music as opposed to a practical high-earning occupation such as law or medicine. If parents make it clear that they have no specific expectations for their child's career, he/she will feel free to explore a greater variety of professions, choosing one based on their own preferences rather than those of their parents.

In a related development, Mohd and Abdul (2015) carried out a study titled "Parental and Peer Influences upon Accounting as a Subject and Accountancy as a Career". The study investigated the level of influence between parents and peers of Malaysian school students in selecting their career choice as accountants. The study used a mixed approach of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The sample comprised 309 secondary school students studying Accounting or Commerce as respondents to the research. The findings revealed that parents,

and mothers, in particular, were more influential in the career choice of secondary school students compared to their peers.

Hewitt (2010) admitted that virtually all students are inclined to the careers that their parents appreciate. Nyarko-Sampson (2013) throws further light on the emotional demands that parents exert regarding careers selection. Parents make a self-determining enquiry regarding the career they think is most suitable for their children. Correspondingly, studies carried out in remote parts of Nigeria according to Oyamo and Amoth (2008), showed that students in the remote parts of the nation tend to solicit assistance from parents than students from developed areas. More so, teachers exert less influence on the career choice of students than parents. Buttressing further, Ukwueze and Obiefuna (2017) noted that the socio-economic status and educational background of parents influence the children's choice of career. Discussing further, empirical studies showed peer influence as a third persuasive force besides parents and teachers which can appreciably impact the life occupations of students, especially girls (Cheung, Wan, Fan, Leong, & Mok, 2013). Revealed in other studies is the positional influence friends and peers command on other students through social comparisons and approval. These peers are counted as significant others and as social agents (Gokuladas, 2010; Cheung and Arnold, 2014).

Empirical findings have confirmed to a greater extent, the impact of the family in which a person lives and the family goals and objectives on his/ her choice of career. Trost and Levin (2000) opined that the family influences the behaviour or character of a child. Tella (2003) also found that parents play an invaluable role in laying the foundation of their children's career. In the same light Wikelund (2006), pointed out that the more intensively parents are involved in their children's learning, the more beneficial are the achievement effects. Thus it is assumed that when parents monitor homework, encourage participation in extra curricula activities, are active in parent's teachers' associations and help children develop plans for their future, such children are likely to respond positively in academic activities. Alika and Egbochuku (2009) found that parental influence exerts a lot of influence on the educational attainment of the adolescent especially the socio-economic status of parents. The authors further reported that when the girl child drops out of school the possibility of reentry into school is enhanced if the adolescent girl comes from the high socio-economic status family. Ryan (2005) reported that academic performance is positively correlated to having parents who enforce rules at home. On the other hand, Oyebode (1980) noted that irrespective of parental educational level and support, children choose jobs that are highly rated in the society.

Wentzel (2016) observed that associating with friends that serve as academic and social resources could have a direct and positive influence on achievement outcomes at school. The author further explained that peers may have a less influential role than parents in influencing adolescents' career choice. The young adolescent who enters school is encouraged to set high aspirations for him or herself and to work to achieve these aspirations. Peer group and parental

influence are sources of pressures which induce the young adolescent into pre-determined occupations, sometimes with little or no considerations on the potentials, actual needs and ego of the child. Career choices are decisions that should be carefully made because it affects the entire life of the individual; hence it becomes very significant to carry out a study such as this should be carried out in order to study on societal influence on vocational career choice among secondary schools students in Afijio Local Government, Oyo State.

Statement of the Problem

Choice of career is characterized with a lot of reasoning. It requires help and assistance of the experienced role models in the societies. Choice of career form the basis of what an individual will become in the future and status he/she will attain the society. It becomes more difficult most especially in the era of technological development where there are many opportunities to choose from by the younger ones. This form the major reasons why family, teachers, peer groups and the society at large intervene in the vocational career of their students.

It is observed most especially in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State that some of the secondary school students are facing a lot of challenges in choosing a profession. Probably, this may be a result of their ignorance or insufficient knowledge to choose a career in school which in the long run results to frustration and stress. This perennial problem is common among the secondary schools students. Hence, the research sought to explore societal influence on the vocational career choice among secondary school students in Afijio Local Government Oyo Area of Oyo State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate societal influence on of vocational career choice among secondary school students in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State. Specifically; the study sought to examine the:

- (1) influence of parental factors on vocational career choice among secondary school students in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State.
- (2) influence of peer group factors on vocational career choice among secondary school students in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Research Questions

Two research questions guided the study

- (1) What is the influence of parental factors on vocational choice among secondary school students in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State?
- (2) What is the influence of peer-group on vocational career choice among secondary school students in Afijio Local Government Area Oyo State?

Research Hypothesis

The null hypotheses formulated for the study was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female respondents on parental influence on students' vocational career choice in Secondary schools, Oyo State

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study had two specific purposes and one hypothesis. The population for the study was made up of all SS III students in all the public secondary schools in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State. This Local Government is made up of 10 Wards. There are seventeen public secondary schools in the area of study with one thousand and five hundred (1,500) SS III students (Ministry of Education, Oyo State). This number formed the population of the study. The sample for the study was one hundred and twenty (120) students selected from seventeen public secondary schools in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State. The schools were selected using stratified sampling technique. Based on the following strata the simple was selected on (i) word basis (ii) proportional bases and (iii) random sampling of s.s.iii students. The research instrument tagged career choice questionnaire (CCQ) had two sections, A and B. Section A contained the demographic variables while sections B contained a total of seventeen items. The items were scored thus: Strongly Agreed (4), Agreed (3), Disagreed (2), Strongly Disagreed (1). The items were generated to reflect the research questions. Items in section B were raised to measure parental and peer group influences on career choice influence. The instrument was developed by the researcher and it was validated by three experts in the Department of Technical Education, Emmanuel Alayande College of Education Oyo, Oyo State. Cronbach's Alpha was used to establish the consistency of the CCQ. A coefficient of 0.82 was obtained. This shows that the instrument is reliable. The researcher administered the CCQ with the assistance of three secondary school teachers in their various schools. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions. An average mean value of 2.5 and above was considered accepted while any mean value less than 2.5 was rejected and t-test statistics to test the hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance. For the null hypothesis, if the observed p-value is less than the fixed p-value (0.05), the null hypothesis is rejected. On the other hand, if the observed p-value is greater or equal to the fixed p-value (0.05), the null hypothesis is accepted.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the influence of parental factors on vocational career choice among secondary school students in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State?

Summary of Data Analysis is shown on Table 1:

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Respondents on the influence of parental factors on vocational choice among secondary school students Afijio Local Government in Oyo State.

S/N	Statement Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	I choose career based on my parent instruction	2.51	0.54	Agreed
2.	My parent career paths influence my career aspirations	2.58	0.56	Agreed
3.	I choose the career to satisfy my parents	2.57	0.72	Agreed
4.	Academic level of my parents affects my choice of career	3.45	0.69	Agreed
5.	I do not like the career chosen for me by my parents	2.53	0.64	Agreed
6.	My parents' living conditions determines my choice of career	3.20	0.56	Agreed
7.	Opinion of other family members influences my career choice	3.15	0.61	Agreed
8.	I considered my parents advice effective for my career sustainability	3.05	0.74	Agreed
9.	My father's work environment affect my opinion on career selection	3.56	0.65	Agreed
10.	My parents occupational opportunity has impact on my choice of career	3.01	0.63	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 1 revealed that all the respondents agreed that parents influence the vocational career choice of their children. This is confirmed by the mean range of 2.51 to 3.56 and the value of standard deviation shows that the opinion of the respondents are not too far from each other.

Research Question 2: What are the influence of peer-group on vocational career choice among secondary school students in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Respondents on the influence of peer-group on vocational choice among secondary school students in Afijio Local Government, Oyo State

S/N	Statement Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	I like to choose career preferred by my friends	2.55	0.55	Agreed
2.	I like to choose my careers for acceptance purpose from my colleagues	3.46	0.59	Agreed
3.	I choose a career because of assistance I will get from my colleagues	3.10	0.51	Agreed
4.	My friends have the greatest control over my choice of career	3.21	0.53	Agreed
5.	I believe that through my friend I can make good career decision	3.37	0.66	Agreed
6.	I do display some office equipment to the students using projector	2.57	0.57	Agreed
7.	I do like to attend the same class with my friends	3.45	0.68	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2022

As presented in table 2 all the respondents agreed that peer group influence the vocational career choice of their children. This is confirmed by the mean range of 2.55 to 3.46 and the value of standard deviation shows that the opinion of the respondents are not too far from each other.

Test of Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female respondents on the parental influence on the vocational choice of secondary students in Afijio Local Government Area, Oyo State.

Table 3: Summary of t-test of the difference in the mean ratings of male and female Respondents on the parental influence on the vocational choice of secondary students

Group	N	Mean	SD	T	Df	P-value	Decision
Male	48	4.29	2.75	0.45	118	0.12	NS
Female	72	6.45	3.62				

P>0.05

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The analysis of the data in Table 3 reveals that there are 48 male and 72 female respondents in the study. The table shows the mean and standard deviation of male and female responses ($x = 4.29$, $SD = 2.75$) and ($x = 6.45$, $SD = 3.62$). There was no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female respondents on the parental influence on the vocational career choice of secondary students ($Df = t_{118} = P(0.12) > 0.05$). This, therefore, means that the hypothesis was accepted. This implies that male and female respondents do not differ in their responses regarding parental influence on the vocational choice of secondary students

Discussion of Findings

The result of the findings in table 1 shows that parents do influence the vocational career choice of the secondary students in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State. This confirms that career choice is a developmental process spanning almost throughout a person's life time. In view of the importance of career choice and its enduring effects on one's life, it is important therefore to note that, the role that parents' socio-economic status plays in their children's choice of career help in vocational education. This finding is corroborated with the earlier findings of Ukwueze and Obiefuna (2017) noted that the socio-economic status and educational background of parents influence the children's choice of career. In addition to this, Nyarko-Sampson (2013) throws further light on the emotional demands that parents exert regarding careers selection. By implication, parental roles in children education and career choice should not be taken with levity hands by parents and guardians in the society. Parental contributions can either influence positive development to their wards' progress or truncate their career. It thus, parents should be cautious in handling their children's choice or interest as well as aptitude in the process of their educational development.

The result of the findings in Table 2 shows that peer group do influence the vocational career choice of the secondary students in Afijio Local Government, Area of Oyo State. This finding is in line with the earlier findings of Wentzel (2016) who observed that associating with friends that serve as academic and social resources could have a direct and positive influence on achievement outcomes at school. The young adolescent who enters school is encouraged to set high aspirations for him or herself and to work to achieve these aspirations. Peer group and parental influence are sources of pressures which induce the young adolescent into pre-determined occupations, sometimes with little or no considerations on the potentials, actual needs and ego of the child. As a result, it is the responsibility of the home, the school and the community environment to try as much as possible on monitoring and guiding the youths in their peer groups and peer group influence. They should endeavor to discourage their wards from bad groups and any peer partnering that might negatively influence their future career.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was discovered that parent and peer groups influence the vocational career decision of secondary schools students in Afijio Local Government Area of

Oyo State. The facts that surround this finding is that if at all parent would involve in the career decision of their children parent should always consider the interest and ability of their children in the chosen profession. And the students themselves should take cognizant of the colleague they will follow in choosing any career in order to prevent frustration in the future.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parental involvement in career selection and development is important but is good to consider the interest and ability of the students before asking them to choose any career
2. The school management need to start giving proper orientation to the students so as to them in selecting appropriate career and this could be achieved through the school counsellor.
3. Societies should encourage and assist the students in the preferred area of life career instead of discouraging of them.
4. Curriculum planners should provide necessary information that will assist the students in choosing a career that will meet up with their future desire.

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