

Counseling for Appropriate Career Choice and Adjustment among Secondary School Students In Abeokuta Metropolis

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to establish the correlation between career information and vocational choice among secondary school students. Survey research design was adopted. Teachers, students and guidance counselors in Odeda Local Government Area of Ogun State constituted the population, 50 teachers, 100 students and 11 guidance counselors were randomly sampled for the study. Four research questions were formulated. Two different questionnaires were used for data collection- one for the students and the other for teachers and counsellor. All their items were closed ended. The data collected were analyzed with frequency, percentage and correlation statistics. Part of the findings showed that friends or peer group constitute the major source of information in the choice of career among students and that there is correlation between career choice and career information. It was recommended that teachers and parents should not impose career on their wards that do not match their interest and abilities and that guidance counselors should be actively involved in students' career choice.

Keywords: *Career, adjustment, secondary, counselling, appropriate*

Background to the study

It is generally believed that one major way of satisfying a whole hierarchy of needs is through work. It is also an acceptable fact that happiness and satisfaction in ones work influences his or her emotional life to a great extent (Ekanem, 1996). This by implication means that a good choice of career will bring immense happiness, sense of accomplishment and satisfactions in any setting individual finds himself.

A popular notion is that some careers are exclusively reserved for certain sexes. In our contemporary society, for example sex difference with sex discrimination is a major factor in the choice of career. It is only recently that females are beginning to venture into careers such as engineering, aviation, architecture and so on. Males on the other hand finds it demeaning to venture into fields such as nursing, home economics, hairdressing among others which are considered to be for females. This society notion of what male and female roles ought to be has energized the empowerment of women into forming a liberation front to highlight the fact that women are equally entitled to enjoy respect which high status jobs are typically associated with.

To provide a new technological and vocational educational orientation for children, adolescents and even reorientation for the adults in a democratic nation like Nigeria there is the need for appropriate. This is corroborated by Shertzer and Stone (1976) as cited in Ogunsanwo(2000), where they asserted that:

“Career or occupational information provides valid and usable data about positions, jobs and occupations including duties, requirements for entrance, condition5 of work, rewards offered, advancement pattern, existing and predictable supply of and demand for workers and sources for further information”

More importantly, this is the age of information technology. Hence, among other factors, career information is one of the major factors that is expected to have influence on the choice of vocation among students. To find out the influence of career information on the vocational choice of students calls for the need for this research.

Purpose of the Study

Researchers such as Ogunsanwo (2000) have found out in extensive studies that there are so many factors that can have influence on vocational choice among students. Some of these factors include: gender, socio-economic status, peer pressure, level of exposure and so on. All other things remaining the same, the more informed an individual is, the lower the chances of his/her making a wrong choice not only of career, but in all areas of life.

The objectives of this research include the following:

- a) to investigate the sources of career information among secondary school students;
- b) to determine the influence of career information on the career choice of secondary school students.
- c) to find out the extent or influence of career information and other factors OP the vocational choice of students;
- d) to find out other factors influencing career choice among students; and a
- e) the relative impact of career information on the vocational choice of male and female students.

Research Questions

In this study, the following research questions will be answered:

1. What are the major factors that influence career choice among secondary school students?
2. What is the relative influence of each of the identified career factors on the vocational choice among students?
3. What is the correlation between career information and vocational choice among Nigerian students?
4. Do secondary school students go for career information in their choice of courses?

Population of the Study

The population for this study comprised of the teachers, students and guidance counselors in Odeda local government area of Ogun State of Nigeria. All the students, teachers and counselors in five (5) selected senior secondary schools in the local government area constitute the population. Meanwhile, there are eleven (11) senior secondary schools in the area out of which the five were selected.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Stratified sampling technique was used for this study, fifty (50) teachers were selected from five schools chosen for this study. Ten (10) teachers were selected from five schools to form a total teacher's sample size of 100.

Research Instruments

Questionnaires were the major research instruments used for the collection of data in this study. There were two questionnaires. While one was for the students, the other was for teachers and the school guidance counselors.

The questionnaires were designed by the researcher to answer the four research question and the hypothesis. They were therefore based on the research questions; hypotheses.

They were therefore based on the research question, hypotheses and the purpose of the study. The questionnaires contained three sections tagged as A, B and C. section A was the major difference between the questionnaires for teachers and students. It contained information about the bio- data of the respondents such as sex gender, status (for teachers), and class (for teachers), and class (for students, among other factors) Section B of the questionnaire contained items that sought for information about career information and its influences on the career choice of students. Section C also contained items that sought for information about the influence of other factors other than career information on vocational choice.

All items in sections A, B and C was structured. That is, statements and options will be provided where the respondents are expected to select the most applicable to them. Five - option likert scale type will be used. The option include: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), and Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD)

The chosen options will indicate their respectively level of agreement or disagreement will indicate their respectively level of agreement or disagreement with the statements provided.

Validation of the Instruments

The questionnaires will be given to experts in questionnaire design, especially the supervisor for this study for correction, scrutinization and panel- beating. They will help to correct all the errors and recommend areas of medication. They will also help to ensure that the contents of the questionnaires are in line with the purpose of the study, research questions. Their recommendations was used to modify the instruments.

Reliability of the Instruments

The questionnaire, instrument were trial- tested in a pilot study on ten (10) students in another school in the same local government which however were not part of the selected sample. The result or data of the pilot study was divided into two and the correlation (or reliability) coefficient will be determined statistically with Pearson Product Moment Correlation and with the adoption of split-half method. The instruments had 0.84 and 0.87 as their respective reliability coefficient. Hence, the two instruments were highly reliable and capable of providing consistent information.

Method of Data Collection

The two instruments were personally- taken to all the schools sampled and administered by the researcher. A lot of assistance was provided by the teachers, the school guidance counselor and also the school authorities. The questionnaire for students were administered to the randomly selected students in the same classroom. They were guided on what the instruction of the questionnaire says. The researcher also went through the questionnaire items with the students with explanations on what to do and how to do it, while leaving decision on the options to them. Questionnaires were collected back from the students immediately in each school with a thorough check to ensure that all the items were completed.

On the part of the teachers, the questionnaires were given to them and they were given same period to complete it. In some cases, the researcher was asked to come back for the questionnaire. In the cases where they were lost, it was re-administered on the teachers and counselors.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the main study were analyzed with statistical tools such as: Frequency counts; Percentage and Correlation.

Research Question 1

The first research question states that:

“What are the major factors that influence career choice among secondary school students?”

Table 1: Opinion of students About Factors affecting their Career Choice

<i>S/N</i>	<i>FACTORS</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>% INF</i>
1	Parents influence	81	64.4	22.4
2.	Friends’ influence	93	74.4	25.7
3.	Teachers’ influence	48	38.4	13.3
4.	Career information influence	56	44.8	15.5
5.	Personal Ability / Performance	43	34.4	11.9
6.	Guidance Counsellors’ influence	41	32.8	09.1
	Total	362	-	100

Same table reveals also about 34.4% (82) of the students chose their career based on their personal ability or pervious academic performance preceding their vocational choice. They explain why only an insignificant number of students perform above average in both internal and most external examinations.

In addition, the table reveals that teachers also influences their wards in their choice of vocation. About 38.4% of the students attested to this fact. Lastly, the table shows that as negligible as 32.8% of the students based their vocational choice on the advice of vocational guidance counselors in most schools.

Research Question 2

The second research question states that:

“What is the relative influence of each of the identified career factors on the vocational choice among student'?”

Table 2: Relative influence of each of the Choice of Students

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Factors</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>% Inf.</i>
1.	Parents influence	81	64.4	22.4
2.	Friends’ influence	93	74.4	25.7
3.	Teachers’ influence	48	38.4	13.3
4.	Career information influence	56	44.8	15.5
5.	Personal Ability / Performance	43	34.4	11.9
6.	Guidance Counsellors’ influence	41	32.8	09.1
	Total	362	-	100

Research Question 3:

The third research question states that:

'What is the correlation between career information and vocational choice among Nigerian students'?

Table 3: Correlation between Career Information and career choice

<i>N</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>p-level</i>	<i>r-cal</i>	<i>r-crit</i>	<i>Decision</i>
6	5	0.05	-1.00	0.67	- ve & high r

Table 2 and 3 reveal that the magnitude the direction of relationship between career information at the possession of the students and the direction of the relationship. It shows that the correlation coefficient is - 1.00. This shows that there is a perfect relationship between career information and career choice. It however shows that the degree of the relationship is negative. This implies that the students do not follow the career counseling at their disposal in their choice of career.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question state that:

“Do secondary school students go for career counseling to obtain inform at/on before the choice of their courses?

Table 4: Data about the Extent to which students go for Counseling before their Choice of Career

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Opinion</i>	<i>Yes F</i>		<i>No % F</i>	<i>%</i>
1.	I went for couns56.eling before I chose my subject	32	25.6	93	74.4
2.	There is no guidance counselor in our school	56	44.8	69	55.2
3.	Our teachers asked us to choose the course we like most	71	56.8	54	43.2
4.	It's only those students that have problem with mates or teachers that go for counseling	109	82.2	16	12.8
5.	Our school organizes career counseling frequency so that we will be able to choose career appropriately.	46	36.8	79	36.8

Table 4 above reveals what obtains in most schools about secondary school students, their career choice and the role played by career information. The table shows that about 74.4% of the students did not for counseling to obtain career information before selecting their subject combinations.

The table reveals further that 44.8% of the schools did not have guidance counselors, while only 55.2% have counselors. In about 56.8% of the schools, it is the subject teachers that serve as the counselor advising the students on their subject combination and courses.

In addition, the table reveals further that in about 87.2% of the cases, most students see counseling as an exercise meant only for students that have peculiar problems especially with the school authority. Lastly, table 4.4. Shows that about 36.8% of the students were of the opinion that their schools organizes career counseling for them so as to obtain career information

Discussion of Findings

The first research question that guided this study sought to know the major factors that influence career choice among secondary school students. The study found out that these factors are very many, meanwhile, the important ones as indicated by the respondent students include the following:-the parents, Friends, peer groups or classmates; teachers; Information available about the career, Personal ability, interest or previous performance in the related subject area; and the school guidance counselor

The implication of this finding is the fact that the factors that motive students are many. It also implies that what motivated one student may not be the one that motivated another student to choosing the same subject combination. This is supported by the findings of Akintoye (1988) in a related study. Meanwhile, Akintoye further pointed out that there may be more than one factor that influences the vocational choice of most students. This in essence means that most students are into different careers and professions based on diverse reasons.

The second research question sought for now the relative influence of each of the identified career factors on the students' vocational choice. As revealed in the study the rank or extent of the influence of the identified factors on vocational choice from the highest to the least include influence of friends I classmates, influence of parents, career information influence, influence of teachers, personal ability / performance, Guidance and counselor's influences. This shows that the most important factors that influences students' vocational choice are their classmates or friends. This finding is in agreement with the report of Onyekwere (2001). He reported that one of the most important stages of personality development is the “identity versus identity confusion stages” lie stressed further that:

“This is a stage where adolescent are preoccupied with they type of identity to assume in life. Having assumed physical maturity and independence, they are faced with challenges of reconcilling their perceived identity and the peoples expected identity of them based on the developmental task of transmission into adulthood.

Onyekwere states further that:

“In an attempt to reconcile this dual expectations of identity, the adolescent re-fights some of the early battles of life. If he succeeds integrating both the perceived and expected identity continuously in different situations, self-identity, develops but if he falls to establish stability, identity confusion ensues.

The study shows further that next to the influences of friends in career choice is the parental influence. This seems to be opposed to the common belief that parents play the most important factor in their children's vocational choice. A lot of studies supported this. For example, Okeke [2000) and Eno [1991) asserted that most professional like doctors, lawyers and accountants want their wards to

take after them as a means of inheriting not only their properties and profession but also as a means of promoting the good name of their family. For example, parents who are medical doctors want their children to be doctors too to inherit their privately owned hospital while lawyers will want their wards to inherit their established chamber.

The third research question sought to establish correlation or the degree of relationship between career information at the disposal of most students and their vocational choice. The result shows that these are perfect correlation or perfect relationship between them. This relationship was however, found to be negative. This implies that the more the career information available to the students about specific courses, the more they are pushed away from opting for such courses. This means that most students do not choose their career based on information about the courses.

The reason for this may not be far-fetched. Most of the information at the disposal of most students about specific courses are not from experts who may be guidance counselors or specialists in that area. Students, most of the time, obtain their information from their friends, who know little or nothing about the specific courses. Thus unreliable, incomplete, and peripheral information most of the time score most of students away from such courses. Another reason for this adverse relationship is the fact that most of the students do not go for counseling and so chose their vocations and careers arbitrarily based on same other factors and agents of education.

The fourth research question asks whether students go for career counseling before the choice of their vocation. It was found out that 25.6% of the students indicated ever gone for counseling during their choice of subject combination. This corroborated the earlier findings that majority of the students do not go for career counseling. This view was upheld by Adeyemi and Akin-Johnson (2000) where they opined that most students do not value career counseling and so do not go for it because, to them, counseling is for weak and probably students that have problems with the institution. Also, the study discovered that in about 57% of the case, it was the class teachers that assisted the students in their career choice. Also, organization of career counseling is very rare occurrence in most secondary schools. The implication of this is that students did not choose course of study based on their personal ability, aptitude and interest.

The negligence of these three key factors (i.e. personal ability, aptitude and interest), amount to students subjecting and depending on so many other factors for the choice of their course and eventual choice of course they cannot cope with and hence inability to cope later.

Conclusion

This study has been able to show that there are so many factors that influence the career choice of most students in life, It has also shown that among these factors the most important ones include the friends I classmates, parents and career information respectively.

Based on this, it can be concluded that most students chose course of study as influenced by their friends as opposed to common opinion where it was believed that parents influences their wards most in vocational choice. This in essence implies that both male and female vocational choices are subject to influences of parents, friends and teachers among others. This may explain why mass failure and examination malpractices are common phenomenon in our education system.

Recommendations

Based on the findings on this study, the following are recommended:

1. Teachers and parents especially should not force their children to opt for subject that do not match their ability simply because they want to impose a career on them.
2. It is necessary to counsel teachers and parents against negative comparison of children. Every child is unique in his or her own ability. The individual differences of children must be respected

in all things including selection of course of study. This includes not only their social differences but also academic, intellectual, altitudinal interest and vocational desires and differences.

3. The role of the guidance counselors must be highly recognized in our schools. They should be given a befitting office that is in a conspicuous with all necessary facilities in our schools.
4. Students should be encourage to consult the counselor for most of their educational problems; and especially their vocational choice.

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