

Influence of Gender, Location, and Parental Factors on Career Choice of Senior Secondary School Students

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of gender, location and parental factors on career choice of senior secondary school students in Delta and Edo States. Four research questions and four hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted an ex-post facto research design. A total of 1,200 students participated in the study. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to draw the sample from the two states. A self-developed instrument was used for data collection. The instrument had a test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.64. The data obtained were analysed using chi-square (χ^2) statistics at 0.05 alpha level. The findings revealed that there was significant relationship between gender and career choice; and between socio-economic status of parents and career choice of senior secondary school students. The study, however, showed that there was no significant relationship between parental education and career choice; and between location of schools and career choice of senior secondary school students.

Keywords: Career Choice; Gender; Location; Parental Factors

BACGROUND TO THE STUDY

Choosing a career is a necessary task that need to be positively accomplished by every person at one time o4 another. This process involves decision making which has the potential to open the door for success or failures. Career choice has therefore, become a complex process especially for those who have no career plan or have not engaged in exhaustive career research, so as to be able to adjust with changing socio-economic circumstances(Wattles, 2009). The challenge is tougher for secondary schools students who do not have sufficient information about occupational or career opportunities to enable them make the right career decisions. In this way, some have described the process of career choice as a complex science with the advent of information and communication technology, the industrial revolution of the 19th century and the presence of job competition in the labour market.

Career has been described as the growth and activities undertaken by an individual throughout a lifetime or a distinct portion of an individual's life, especially those related to that person's interests. This comprises of job, positions and work accomplished over a period of time, rather than just referring to one role or responsibility. The understanding here is that could hold on to a career, but take up different roles or responsibilities within the same career over a period of time comparable to a life time. For instance, a students' career path could be law, even though such student could work for numerous different companies and in various areas of law over a lifetime. It is also seen as a course of action which an individual embarks upon for a life time for which the person is adequately compensated and from which the person derives satisfaction.

According to Popoola (2004), career is a profession for which one experience regulated training over a period of time and which one intends to follow for the whole of one's life. It is thus a chosen pursuit, life work and success in one's profession. Gettings (2012) and Dawn (2013) both agree that career is lifelong undertaken in which an individual has interest, feels strongly about doing it, and from which the person generates income. Furthermore, Powers (2013) sees career as a process of determining a field of learning that requires certain knowledge and skills, acquired through a specific educational programme which results in a certificate or degree attesting to accomplishment. Since the average person works 45 to 50 years in his or her lifetime, finding a satisfying career and not just a job becomes very important.

Most of the students who are in secondary schools do not have accurate information about occupational opportunities to help them make appropriate career choice due to complex and rapid changes in the society. Observations have shown that despite great effort by families, government agencies and non-government agencies, many young people encounter challenges in the transition from the world of school to that of work (Pilot & Regis, 2012).

Investigating and better understanding the numerous factors that influence career choice is a topic of recurring interest in Nigerian schools. To guide students in their career choice, socio-demographic factors seems to play a central role in this lifetime process (Pilot & Regis, 2012). These factors include family, school, career guidance programme, environment, media and peers. In this study, the influence of gender, location, parental factors and socio-economic status on the career choice of students were investigated.

Gender has to do with a range of characteristics that pertains to being feminine or masculine. It points to categorical distinction between male and female. Some people refer to it as the economic, social, political, and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being a woman or a man. It is the role of being male or female in society, otherwise known as gender identity. The influence of gender on career choice cannot be overemphasized. Gender is a sociological experience of being a male or female. It has to do with personality and central components of self-concept.

Parental attitudes of treating their children differently on the bases of being boys and girls, create an early awareness in children of the notion of gender identity. It is observed that parents are more likely to allow boys to try new things and activities than girls. Children also look up to their parents for examples and role models. Thus, boys would want to be like their fathers and girls like their mothers. That means boys and girls are influenced by gender relations, behaviour, tasks and activities undertaken by females and males in the family. In this way, children are likely to impute observed parental roles in terms of gender into their definition of gender identity.

Closely related to gender identity is the concept of stereotyping conceptions. This means choosing careers on the bases of what has been identified as male or female careers. Submitting to the above position, Mapfumo, Chireshe and Peresuh (2002) reveals that both males and females choose their career under stereotyping perception whereby male jobs are said to include engineering, building, electrical work, carpentry, managerial jobs, security services, welding, mining and driving. Female jobs included nursing, catering, designing, teaching, secretarial and domestic. They revealed that there was a strong positive correlation (r) = 0.95 between boys' and girls' perceptions of masculine and feminine jobs. Subscribing to the foregoing, Evans (2006) observed that females report valuing jobs attributes related to interpersonal relationship and helping others than males. On the other hand, males report valuing job attribute related to leadership, power and income than females.

McQuaid and Bond (2003) observed that in Scotland girls had negative attitudes to work in jobs perceived to be masculine. The findings indicated that quite a number of pupils said that both men and women were suitable to work as waiters/ waitresses, teachers, shopkeeper, police officers, managers, lawyers/ solicitors and doctors. However, other jobs remained persistently gender stereotyped, including perceived 'males' jobs of lorry driving, engineering, plumbing, working as electricians, laborers as well as armed force. Female jobs of nurse and care assistant remained as female jobs.

Male's and female's career choices are normally different because of differences in their self-concept. Gender differences in attitude are present in early adolescence and continue throughout middle and high school. Findings from various studies reveal that despite girls having higher teacher rating than boys, they are less prone to choose careers in physical science or computing. The differences are observed in various careers.

Location is an environment, place or situation when an event occurs regularly. With regard to the subject of this research, it is the environment or places where students reside and receive formal education. This is known to have the possibility of influencing their career choice as they are a product of their environment. A location that is dominated with skilled and professional careers, will likely influence the choice of career of students who live in those areas as against locations that are dominated non skilled or semi skilled careers. This is against the understanding that people are influenced by what they observe.

There are two main types of locations common in most environments, namely rural and urban. While the rural population is comprised mostly of low income and unskilled workers, the urban population is comprised of high income, skilled and professional workers. However, this is not to say that there may not be small portions of the population with a bit either location in each other. The dominant population in each location as it has been observed is the subject of this study.

Schools located in the rural areas will teach subjects like Mathematics, English, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Agricultural science, Christian Religious Knowledge, Literature, Economics and Commerce. These are the basics that are common to most schools. On the other hand, Schools located in the urban area will in addition to the basic subjects, offer subjects like Additional Mathematics, Computer Science, Creative Arts, Music, Technical Drawing etc. These variations have the capacity to influence the choice of career of students in those locations.

Megan (2015) in a study of occupational exposure of students in rural and isolated communities, observed that students in rural schools face many challenges unaccustomed to individuals in urban and rural areas. Khattri, Riley and Kane (1997) stated that some rural communities have little exposure to the breadth of jobs available in their region. Many of them lack the drive to complete high school and move on to secondary school due to their limited environment. A consequence of the above is that students living in these communities according to her, seem to have a more restricted worldview compared to their urban counterparts based on the few professions available in these areas. In rural settlements, exposure to diverse professions and trades can be even more problematic, as local economies are typically agriculture based. It is common to find individuals in these communities being interested in occupations that they see every day around them in most cases.

On career choice in rural areas, Owuamanam (1983) revealed that subjects studied in schools, influence career choice. He noted that he took accounting as a course because he attended commercial school. But these types of schools are not found in the rural areas. The author further

noted that school subjects relevantly chosen and rationally balanced and taught with definite aims to any child at the appropriate moment, form major factors in finding solutions to Nigerian's social political and economic problems. In a follow up of two generations of secondary school leavers of 1956-1960 in a village secondary school in the then Bendel State, observed that 72% of them indicated that their parents were either farmers or traders, 28% indicated that their parents had influenced their career. But that the formal education or subject studied became a status symbol, which turned them away from parental occupations especially where those occupations appear to be those done by illiterates.

The adolescent period is an exciting time for them as they anxiously look into the possibility of making their own decisions regarding occupational interest. The ability to make these choices have been observed to be influenced by the events in the home of such students. When the adolescent sees a home that is flourishing and happy due to in part by the nature of career that the parents are engaged in, there is the likelihood that such a child will be influenced by these prevailing circumstances. A child who sees a father who is a banker, doing well, able to provide for the family, earns respect from family members and neighbours, will most likely want to be like the father.

Parental influences could either be positive or negative on their decisions. Sometimes parental influence tends to disregard the child's individual interest. Individual interest in making career choice is known to be a significant factor in sustaining the interest of the individual in the chosen career. Ignoring this aspect could have an adverse effect on the eventual career choice that has been made.

In most cases, the career selected is as a result of substantial impression made in the individual's life, leading to a certain career choice. Parents' educational background may impact an individual's opinion on whether or not to continue their education. A television personality may exert some influence on the student. As the child grows up within the nuclear family and extended family comprised of uncles, aunts, cousins, and grand parents, these people may have some influence on the student's choice of career. Thus parents shape the future personality of their children which in turn determine the career choices they make.

Parents have a crucial task of preparing the child for education. Students' from rich backgrounds are more likely to gain a better education than those from poor backgrounds. In their task of socializing the child, parents have a great influence on the child's development and future life choices and thus shaping the personality. Parents shape the personality of their children by influencing the level of education of their children; the knowledge they have about work and different occupations; the beliefs and attitudes they have toward work; and the motivation they have to succeed (Wattles, 2009).

Some of the major parental factors in children's career decision making include attitudes and behaviour; reinforcement, and expectations. Williams (2016) noted that, if their parents' jobs give them great satisfaction or provide a comfortable lifestyle, children see the perks early on, and may favour these careers over others. In contrast, if parents complain about their jobs or struggle to support the family on the income their jobs provide, children are more likely to seek more fulfilling or higher-paid roles.

Parents whose socio-economic status is low may hold values that place girls in the homemaker role and reflect less emphasis on occupational career preparation. Given this disposition, it is understandable that the self-efficacy of girls with respect to career opportunities is linked to the

economic support they can expect to receive from their parents (Lankard, 1995). For low income families, a large family will make the parents spend less money to aid the older children in attending school, while younger children may receive more financial assistance since the financial strain is less once the older children leave home. Mortimer (1992) noted that poverty was found to significantly affect the vocational development of high school students indirectly through its impact on feelings of economic self-efficacy.

They further observed that, adolescents living in conditions of poverty have lower feelings of economic self-efficacy regarding future vocational goals, and this low feeling of economic self-efficacy is found to be adversely related to academic achievement and college preparation and positively related to dropping out of school (Mortimer, 1992). This is supported by Kibera (2012) who noted that secondary school students with parents in middle and high socio-economic status had higher educational and occupational aspirations and expectations than students whose parents were in the low SES class. The mothers' occupational level seemed to influence the children's career and educational aspirations more strongly than that of their fathers (Kibera, 2012; Aswani, 2012). Additionally, students from high SES households preferred to enter professional jobs while those from low SES households were comfortable with clerical jobs (Kibera, 2012).

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level:

1. There is no significant relationship between gender and career choice of senior secondary students in Delta and Edo States
2. There is no significant relationship between location and the career choice of senior secondary students in Delta and Edo States
3. There is no significant relationship between parental education and career choice of senior secondary students in Delta and Edo States
4. There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status of parents and the career choice of senior secondary students in Delta and Edo States

METHOD

The design adopted for the study is Ex-post facto research. This is the most appropriate design for the study because the independent variables of interest such as gender, location, parental factors and socio-economic status of parents cannot be manipulated. The population for the study consists of one hundred and fifty eight thousand four hundred and sixty-six (158466) senior secondary school one (SS1) students from eight hundred and four public senior secondary schools in Delta and Edo (Source: National Bureau of Statistics, Education Data, 2016).

The sample size for the study consists of 1200 students for the area of study. Multistage and stratified sampling technique was adopted in selecting the sample. In the first stage, the stratified random sampling technique was used to select five Local Government Areas from each of the senatorial district of each state. These Local Government Areas were selected based on the highest number of schools and students. In the second stage, four schools were randomly selected from each of the five Local Government Areas per senatorial constituency of each state. The schools were selected with the use of ballot paper and bowl technique. All the schools in each of the five Local Government Areas were written on a piece of paper, squeezed and put in a bowl each according to their Local Government. A neutral person was asked to pick any four schools from each of the bowls representing the Local Government Areas.

Having selected the schools, the researcher used simple random technique to select 40 SS1 students from each school. That constituted a third stage of the sampling process. The bowl technique was used to select the students. In total of 1200 students were selected for the study. The whole essence was to ensure fair represent of the subjects.

The instrument for collection of data was based on a structured questionnaire titled Influence of Gender, Location and Parental factors on Career Choice Questionnaire (IGLPCCQ) developed by the researcher. IGLPCCQ was used in collecting the data for the study. The IGLPCCQ comprised of two sections. Section A elicits personal data of the students while section B elicits the influence of students on choice of career, which is an adaptation from motivation for occupational preference scale (MOPS) by Bakare (1977).

To determine the reliability of the instrument, it was administered using the test-re-test method to 40 Senior Secondary School one (SS1) Students in Bayelsa State. Then Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. An index of 0.64 was obtained as a measure of internal consistency. For the analysis of data generated for the study, the chi-square (χ^2) analysis was used to test the stated hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the gender and career choice of senior secondary students in Delta and Edo States

Table 1: Chi-square summary on the relationship between gender and career choice of senior secondary students in Delta and Edo States

Gender	Career Choice					df	Chi-square	Sig(2-tailed)
	Law	Engineering	Medical Line	Others	Total			
Female	81	152	187	180	600	3	11.475	0.009
Male	53	139	183	225	600			
Total	134	291	370	405	1200			

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table 1 shows chi-square value of 11.475 and a p-value of 0.009, testing the hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value is less than the alpha level, so the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between gender on the career choice of senior secondary students in Delta and Edo States is rejected. Consequently, the result indicates that there is a significant relationship between the influence of gender on the career choice of senior secondary students in Delta and Edo States.

Using the contingency coefficient in determine the degree of association between the influence of gender on career choice of senior secondary school students in Delta and Edo States showed that 0.09 was a low association between the gender and career choice. The amount of contribution of gender to career choice was 9%.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between location on the career choice of senior secondary students in Delta and Edo States

Table 2: Chi-square test on the influence of location on career choice of senior secondary students in Delta and Edo States

Location	Career Choice				Total	df	Chi-square	Sig(2-tailed)
	Law	Engineering	Medical Line	Others				
Rural	73	148	205	222	648	3	6.229	0.101
Urban	74	135	190	153	552			
Total	147	283	315	375	1200			

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table 2 shows a chi-square value of 6.229 and a p-value of 0.101, testing the hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value is greater than the alpha level, so the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between location and the career choice of senior secondary students in Delta and Edo States is retained.

Using the contingency coefficient in determine the degree of association between the influence of location on career choice of senior secondary school students in Delta and Edo States indicated that 0.070 was a low association between the students location of school on career choice. The amount of contribution of students school location to career choice was 7%.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between parental education and career choice of senior secondary students in Delta and Edo States

Table 3: Chi-square test of parental education on the influence on career choice of senior secondary students in Delta and Edo States

Parental Education	Career Choice				Total	df	Chi-square	Sig(2-tailed)
	Law	Engineering	Medical Line	Others				
Not Educated	77	132	191	130	530	3	1.566	0.667
Educated	90	175	225	180	670			
Total	167	307	416	310				

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table 3 reveals a chi-square value of 1.566 and a p-value of 0.667, testing the hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value is greater than the alpha level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is which states that there is no significant relationship between the influence of parental educational level on the career choice of senior secondary students in Delta and Edo States is accepted.

Using the contingency coefficient in determine the degree of association between the influence of parental education on career choice of senior secondary school students in Delta and Edo States revealed that 0.03 was a low association between the parental education on career choice students. The amount of contribution of parental education to career choice was 3%.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status of parents on the career choice of senior secondary students in Delta and Edo States

Table 4: Chi-square test on the influence of socio-economic status of parents on career choice of senior secondary students in Delta and Edo States

SES	Career Choice					df	Chi-square	Sig(2-tailed)
	Law	Engineering	Medical Line	Others	Total			
Low	53	78	138	111	380	6	21.037	0.02
Middle	74	122	111	93	400			
High	58	95	151	116	420			
Total	185	295	400	320	1200			

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table 4 shows a chi-square value of 21.037 and a p-value of 0.02, testing the hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value is less than the alpha level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result reveals that there is significant relationship between socio-economic status of parents and the career choice of senior secondary students in Delta and Edo States.

Using the contingency coefficient in determine the degree of association between the influence of socio-economic status of parents on career choice of senior secondary school students in Delta and Edo States showed that 0.130 was a low association between the socio-economic status of parents on career choice of students. The amount of contribution of socio-economic status of parents to career choice was 13%.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the results were discussed under the following subheadings:

Influence of Gender and Career Choice

The finding showed that there was significant relationship between the influence of gender and career choice of senior secondary school students in Delta and Edo States. This could be as a result of gender stereotyping perceptions which people have based on exposure to the environment and career role model that influences peoples career choice. This finding supports the views of Bleeker and Jacobs (2004) who conducted a study using male and female adolescent as participants working in part time jobs. It revealed gender difference whereby job such as bus conductors, gardeners, manual labourers, journalist were held almost exclusively by male adolescents, while other jobs such as baby sitting and house maid were held exclusively by female adolescents.

Location of Schools and Career Choice

The results here indicated that there was no significant relationship between location of schools and career choice of senior secondary school students in Delta and Edo States. This finding is at variance with the studies of Owuamanam(1983) who revealed that location of schools influence career choice and also that some students took accounting as a course found in commercial schools that were not in rural schools.

Influence of Parental Education and Career Choice

The results here revealed that there was no significant relationship between the influence of parental education and career choice of senior secondary school students in Delta and Edo States. This finding is also in line with De-Ridder (1990) who noted that lower levels of parental education can retard adolescents' career development and income that lessens the chances of

attending college or of attaining a professional goal which basically predetermines the child's likely career choice.

Influence of Socio-Economic Status of Parents and Career Choice

The results showed that there was significant relationship between the influence of socio-economic status of parents and career choice of senior secondary school students in Delta and Edo States. This finding supports the view of Kibera (2012) who noted that secondary school students with parents in middle and high socio-economic status had higher academic and professional aspiration and expectations than those whose parents were in the low socio-economic status.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusion was made: Gender and Socio-economic status of parents had significant relationship with career choice of senior secondary school students in Delta and Edo States. Parental education and location of schools had no significant relationship with career choice of senior secondary school students in Delta and Edo States. On the basis of the above findings, it is recommended that counsellors should be appointed to all schools to guide the process of career choice in the light of changing dynamics of economic situations in our world and in Nigeria in particular.

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