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PARENTAL INFLUENCE AND THE CAREER CHOICE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of parental variables like parental education, quality of parent- student relationship, parental career and socio-economic status of parents on the career choice of secondary school students in the study area. The research design employed for this study was descriptive research of survey type. The descriptive research was considered appropriate because it described the existing situation of career choice of students in the study area. The population for this study were all the public secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria. The sample for the study comprised of 1,500 students that were drawn from the entire population of students in Osun State. Multistage sampling procedure was used in the sample selection. The public schools were stratified into rural and urban areas where all the schools in the local government headquarters were regarded as urban schools. All others in the villages and suburbs in the local governments were grouped as rural schools. 125 students were drawn from each of the secondary schools using stratified, proportional and simple random procedure. Students were stratified into male and female in each school. 75 female and 50 male students were drawn from the students using randomization. A self-designed questionnaire titled “Parental Influence and Career Choice Questionnaire” (PICCCQ) was used to collect

information from respondents. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Test-retest was carried out in this regard. The scores generated from the questionnaire administrations were subjected to correlation. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient of 0.78 was got and this was adjudged to be high enough to determine the reliability of the instrument. Copies of the questionnaire were administered on respondents by the researcher with the help of research assistants. The hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics. Hypotheses one to four were tested using ANOVA test while hypothesis five was validated using Multiple Regression Analysis. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The results showed that parental education, quality of parent-student relationship, parental career and socio-economic status of parents have significant influence on the career choice of secondary school students in Osun State. The results also showed that identified variables significantly predict the career choice of secondary school students in Osun State. The results further indicated that the most important predictor variable that contributed to the career choice of secondary school students in the study area is parental career, closely followed by parental education, quality of parent-student relationship and the socio-economic status of parent. Parents are therefore advised not to force their will on their children so as to avoid any consequential effect of their acts. Parents should also keep a tab on their children to know their hobbies.

Keywords: Career choice; parental influence; secondary school students; significance; southwestern Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The choice of career appears to have been a serious problem among the secondary school students in Nigeria and particularly in Osun State. For instance, a lot of students in secondary schools in the study area think that their future is a glorious adventure in which they are bound to succeed. Many of these young stars seem to be concerned about early entry into the occupational world and finding productive and rewarding places in such careers as law, engineering, medicine, accountancy and so on.

Also, students in secondary schools in Osun State are always worried about what they will do with their lives and the kind of adult they will become. The issue at hand is that how the young people of today meet the problems of tomorrow will depend upon the amount of success they make in planning for the tomorrow. Planning for tomorrow itself is primarily hinged on some environmental variables, most especially the parental influence.

Research studies by Shumba & Naong, 2012; Falaye & Adams, 2008; Salami, 2006 have shown that families, parents and guardians who are referred to as significant others play an important role in the occupational aspirations and career development of their children. Mare, 2009; Mav & Bikos, 2000 found that college students and young adults cited parents as an essential influence on their choice of career.

As an agent of socialization, a child always has his or her first interactions with people within the nuclear family. Significant people in the family like father, mother and elder siblings are a great source of aspiration for some children, especially when they are contented with the type of career they have adopted (Desforjes & Abinchaar, 2003). A child is affected by a number of parental-related factors such as the marital relationship of the parents, the socio-economic status, the atmosphere of the home (whether parents are warm or hostile), the environmental condition, occupational status of the parents and the number of siblings in the

family (Bollu-Steve & Sanni, 2013). The parental dynamics therefore play a pivotal role in the career readiness of the student.

Studies have shown that parents in particular play a significant role in the occupational aspirations and career development of their children. For instance, (Abbasi & Sarwat, 2014) in America, (Amani, 2016) in South Africa and (Ogunyewo, Afemikhe, Ajio & Olanlesi-Alvi, 2015), studies revealed that parents influence the choice of careers among high school students. Without parental approval or support, students and young adults seem often reluctant to pursue or even explore diverse career possibilities.

In number of ways, parents influence career choice of students; for example, in Nigeria, a study was conducted to investigate the influence of family background on the academic performance of secondary school students. It was found that supportive parents for their children's career decision making and for the success of their careers (Barker, 2010).

The level of education, the type of occupation and the level of contentment with parents' careers shape the choice of all other living in the same environment. Also, other parental – related factors such as the marital relationship of the parents, the socio-economic status, the atmosphere of the home (whether parents are warm or hostile), the environmental condition, occupational status of the parents and the number of siblings in the family (Bollu-Steve & Sanni, 2013). The parental dynamics therefore, play a pivotal role in the career readiness of the students.

Parental education was found to influence students' career choice. For example, Abiola (2014) in Nigeria is of the view that highly educated parents have more resources, both financially and in terms of academic advice, to support their children than poor parents. Also, in America (Dustman, 2004) says, parental education levels contribute to children's career pathways.

Careers of parents are also variables that may have influence on children's career choices. For example, Indian and Nigerian parents' career were found to be influential on students' choice of careers (Baskshi' Ghandi, Shuh & Maru, 2012).

The parents' socio-economic status of a students seem to affect their career choice. Students from low socio-economic backgrounds may likely attend poorly funded schools, hence, their limitation in the choice of career, while the students from higher social class may have varieties of choice (Eamon, 2005).

A plethora of research investigations and articles related to parental/family influence have been published on these topics as reinforced in this paper. However, these articles did not provide the empirical research and analysis needed to understand the depth of a parental influence upon a son's and daughter's career choice. Moreover, most of these researches were conducted outside Nigeria why the ones conducted in Nigeria did not focus on the study area (Osun state). This research, therefore, focused on the influence of parents on the career choice of secondary school students in Osun state, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Career choice tends to be a persistent problem for students in the contemporary society. That is why it is common for students to get into occupations that are not quite suitable to their abilities. Wrong choice of career, based on some variables, can lead to job dissatisfaction, under

performance if not complete malfunction, frustration and inefficiency; all of which translate in the long run to national economic crisis. This constitutes a problem as student often makes wrong choice.

Although, there have been various studies on the study area, it is pertinent to this research to examine the parental influence as a variable on career choice of secondary school students in Osun State. The general question that was raised to guide this study is to what extent would parental influence have on career choice of secondary school students in Osun state, Nigeria.

Research Hypothesis

The research hypotheses underpinning this study were postulated as follows:

- 1) Parental education has no influence on the career choice of secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria.
- 2) The quality of parent-student relationship would not influence the career choice of secondary school students in the study area.
- 3) Parental career has no influence on the career choice of secondary school students in the study area.
- 4) Social-economic status of parents has no influence on the career choice of secondary school students in the study area.
- 5) None of the identified parental variables has the highest prediction on career choice of secondary school students in the study area.

Literature Review

Parental perception plays a vital role in the life of children including their academic, professional and personal lives. The objective of this study was to search the literature to determine the influence of parents on career choice of their children.

Parents with different demographic and psychographic characteristics have different expectations from the education of their children which eventually effect behaviour of their children towards career choice. The common insight of parents about their children's education is to earn more respect and money rather than as a source to bring positive change in the society. Extensive research has been done in this regard internationally and influence of parents on undergraduate and graduate students especially entering the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines and careers (Craig, Vermal, Stoke, Evans, Abroi, 2018).

A number of other researchers have also explored influence of parents on their children's career paths, (Frome, Eccles, 1998) and parents views about children's career education. Studies have also found parental influence from children's perspective and it is found that teen age students especially female students cite parents as an important influence on their choice of career (Cordeeto, Lens, Paixao, Lacante, Luycy, 2018). One of the studies concluded that parent's influence on career choice of their children was strong enough to be utilized as effective career counseling technique.

Many other studies examined in depth parent's behaviour and influence on their children's career development process as well as perception of "student" about parental influence on career choice. Results of these studies illustrated that children also perceived their parents as having high expectations about their studies as well as influencing choice of their future career.

In contrast, one study concluded that parental influence did not significantly affect the career choice of adolescents and they have some form of independence in making career choices against the wishes of their parents (Olaosebikan, Olusakin, 2014).

The ideas of all above mentioned scholars established a relationship of a kind between parental influence and career choice. In all their explanations were limited to their observations in their various environments.

This study dwell on parental influence on career choice of secondary school students in Osun State which is the study area.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted parent-child relationship and children career aspiration theories.

Parent-child relationship

Anne Roe (1957) believed parents had a mere direct influence on career choice throughout their children's live. Roe's theory was largely related to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. She believed that any needs that were not satisfied during childhood, would either be eliminated from ones consciousness, or serve as unconscious motivations. For example, Roe (1957) states that "A child whose expressions of natural curiosity were thoroughly blocked, would cease to be curious". Therefore, Roe maintained that parental attitudes toward their children were more important than the career they possessed or their behaviours.

Roe also believed that parenting styles were a major factor in determining a child's career choice. She included the following six parenting styles in her model: "over protecting" "over demanding" "emotional rejection", "neglect of the child", "casual acceptance" and "loving acceptance".

Roe hypothesized that children who experienced the parenting styles of "loving acceptance", "over protection" and "over demanding" would be oriented towards careers with persons, such as jobs dealing with service, culture or entertainment. On the other hand, children exposed to parenting styles of "casual acceptance", "neglect" and "emotional rejection" would be oriented towards careers with non persons, such as scientific and mechanical interest.

Children Career Aspiration Theory

Lavine (1982) opines that children's career aspirations were only influenced by parental dominance observed at home, not the dominant role parents might have had at work.

In addition, Gottfredson (1981) opined that children would adopt their parents' aspirations and their ideas of acceptable careers. She also found parental influence to be more significant for children lower intelligence and social status. She is of the opinion that the theory

shows young people successful role models in careers they are interested in and have them share these with their family. Also, Gottfredson (1996) theorized that children at elementary age reject certain careers due to the societal message they received.

The two theories of Lavine and Gottfredson show the influence and involvement of parents in career choice of their children which looks at parental influence and career choice of secondary school students in Osun state.

Research Methods

The research design employed for this study was descriptive research of survey type. The descriptive research was considered appropriate because it described the existing situation of career choice of students in the study area. The survey type was employed in the sense that a small sample from a large population were studied in order to draw inferences about the characteristics of entire population with respect to the incidence, distribution and interrelationship of the variable of interest. The population for this study were all the public secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria. The sample for the study comprised of 1,500 students that were drawn from the entire population of students in Osun State. Multistage sampling procedure was used in the sample selection. Stage one was a selection of two local government areas from the present three senatorial districts in Osun State using simple random sampling technique. Stage two involved the selection of two public secondary schools from each of the six selected local government areas using stratified and simple random sampling method. The schools were stratified into rural and urban schools where all the schools in the local government headquarters were regarded as urban schools. All others in the villages and suburbs in the local governments were grouped as rural schools. 125 students were drawn from each of the secondary schools at the third stage which is the last stage of sample selection using stratified, proportional and simple random procedure. Students were stratified into male and female in each school. The proportional selection came in when the female students outnumbered the male students. 75 female and 50 male students were drawn from the students at the final stage using randomization. -

A self-designed questionnaire titled “Parental Influence and Career Choice Questionnaire” (PICCCQ) was used to collect information from respondents. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section A sought information on demographic variables, such as sex, age, school location, parents’ occupation and religion. Section B helped to elicit information on parental background and its influence on students’ career choice. The validity of the instrument was ensured through face and content validity. The reliability of the instruments was ascertained in order to measure the consistency with which it sets to measure. Test-retest was carried out in this regard. The instrument was administered on twenty students that were not part of sampled students twice within two weeks’ interval. The scores generated from the two administrations were subjected to correlation. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient of 0.78 was got and this was adjudged to be high enough to determine the reliability of the instrument.

Copies of the questionnaire were administered on respondents by the researcher with the help of research assistants. Prior to this, the introduction of the researcher to the principals of the selected schools was done. Also, permission was taken to address the students of the selected schools. The completed copies of the questionnaire were collected by the researcher immediately after completion of the work. The hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics. Hypotheses one to four were tested using ANOVA test while hypothesis five was

validated using Multiple Regression Analysis. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The next section therefore presents the analysis and description of results.

Conclusion

In line with the findings of this study, it was concluded that parental 'attributes such as parental education, quality of parent-student relationship, parental career and socio-economic status of parent have significant influence on the choice of career among secondary school students in Osun State. However, it was discovered that parental career has the highest significant contribution to career choice of secondary school students in Osun State, followed by parental education, quality of parent-student relationship and lastly, socio-economic status of parent. Hence, it is obvious that parents have a lot of work to do in order to assist the students in selecting a career. They are however advised not to force their will⁴ on their children so as to avoid any consequential effect of their acts. Parents should also keep a tab on their children to know their hobbies.

This research has focused on the parental influence on the career choice of secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria. It will be worthwhile if similar studies are conducted in order regions of the country. Other environmental variables could also be researched into for analytical and comparison sake.

Recommendation

- Parents are enjoined to always advise their wards accordingly in order to select appropriate career choice.
- They are also advised not to force their will on their children so as to avoid any negative effect of their acts.
- Students should be encouraged to select their choice of career without fear of failure.
- Parents should keep a tab on their children in order to know their hobbies and understand them.
- Government and all stakeholders in the education sector should organize public lectures on selection of career choice.

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