

**FACTORS AFFECTING CAREER CHOICE OF STUDENTS IN
SECONDARY SCHOOL: A REVIEW**

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ABSTRACT

This paper takes a look at the factors affecting-career choice of students in secondary schools, hence schools is a significant agent of socialization where individuals acquire various attitudes, knowledge and skills which eventually influence career choice. The writer discussed on how students accidentally choose career without proper guidance and counseling. The factors affecting career choice of student. The paper concludes with how career most be carefully chosen, well planned, organized, implemented and evaluated. With these review, it is recommended that functional guidance and counseling units should be established in all secondary schools and tertiary institutions to help students in career guidance.

Introduction

The key to success in every endeavor is proper planning to meet set targets so that activities pursuant to the set objectives will be orderly and systematic. In Nigerian society, every body is encouraged right from childhood to engage in one form of work or the other as means of livelihood. Ipaye (1986), asserts that work is rightly valued aspect of a traditional Nigeria life, such that, at a tender age children learn works that are essential for their survival. This was the main reason why the traditional system of education was tailored towards character training and job orientation.

Olayinka, (1993) sees a career as a sequence of occupation, jobs and positions occupied throughout a persons working life. According to Okoye (1990), career development as a stimulating agent in the vocational life of an individual, plays the role of helping the individual identify, the inner lying vocational or career potentials in him, and helping him further to make vocational decisions that would produce life long effects on him.

Discussion on career choice among Secondary School Students, should be very essential, especially these days when many educational institutions arc yet to have guidance and counseling centers. Many students in Nigeria Secondary Schools make this choice unwisely and entered occupation for which they are poorly suited by ability and interest.

Vocational guidance is a fusion of educational and vocational techniques/tactics for assisting students to identify future vocations for themselves and at the same time, make effective use of present educational experience, connected with such future choice. Identifying oneself vocationally however, depends upon coming to terms with ones personal characteristics and ones value.

Anchor (1975), who viewed that; though schools and colleges are meant to produce people for particular profession of the course Mhey undergo, immediately after graduating. Some will further their profession while others will move along with unrelated profession or career (pp 5-6).

Super (1957) recognized three elements in the process by which self-concept affect vocational, development, namely, the process of self formation, translations and implementation. He further said this process goes on throughout life. In order words, the development of career may be viewed as a continuing process of self-concept implementation.

For Super (1957), self concept development involve growth, exploration, establishment maintenance and decline.

To Super (1957) career maturity is primarily a two dimensional construct composed of both cognitive process and attitudinal variable.

Crites (1969) extended Supers conception by developing a different model of career maturity in adolescence. In his model, a hierarchy of variables combines to determine a person's degree of career maturity, in each of the two dimensions.

His greatest contribution was the development of a career maturity inventory with attitude scale and competence (cognitive) scale.

Crites (1969) concept of competence in career maturity, self-appraisal as based on the assumption, that individual who can accurately evaluate the career appropriateness of oilier individuals are good self-appraisers.

Ebgochuku (1997), further said it is assumed that an individual who has thought more about his/her vocational assets liabilities has greater self knowledge. This assumption supports Ginsberg, Axelrad and Herman (1951), Super (1957) and Crilcs (1965) position that career maturity is a development concept. Important career decisions include a career field and deciding how you want your career to develop.

The need for extensive guidance and counseling activities to help students develop self awareness self-confidence and realistic « mature attitude, as well as to match his/her interests and abilities against potential career is well recognized.

Therefore the goal of vocational guidance is to help students to find a personality fulfilling and social useful career.

Reasons Why Some-Students Accidental Choose Their Own Career

Many theories of career development and choice have been development of which some arc applicable to Nigerian situation. Theories are guidelines for actions. "To try to function without a theory is to try to function in chaos, for without planning events in some order, it is impossible to function in a meaningful way".

Forming a theory is like a structure or a pyramid. A good theory must have an objective, must be reliable, must be coherent, must not be ambiguous, most have operational definition and must be usable in research.

Again a good theory shows what counselors are expected to do for their clients.

Hoppock (1970) theory, viewed that career choice are chosen to meet the needs of individual such as psychological, physical and intellectually perceived needs. He stressed that job satisfaction depends upon the extent to which the job one chooses or undertakes to meet the needs.

Roes (1984) need theory of vocational choice also postulated that there are some primary unconscious needs of individual which should be satisfied during early years so as to maintain proper career development and choice in adult life. He maintained that the desire to satisfy the unmet needs determine the type of career a person chooses.

Ginzberge, Ginburg, Exelrad and Hema (1964) also developed their theory of vocational choice, which emphasised on some important variable that influence career choice. These include reading factors, educational process, emotional factors and personal values. They also considered vocational choice as covering three principal periods as: -

- a. Fantasy period (4-12 years)
- b. Tentative period (13-18 years)
- c. Realistic period (19-21 years)

According to them, the whole process consists of series of compromise, substitution optimization, which vary considerably from person to person resulting in people choosing different careers.

Super's theory of vocational choice also advocates that career development rest greatly in life stages as follows:

- i. GROWTH: Fantasy (4-10 years) Interest (11-12 years) Capacity (13-14 years).
- ii. EXPLORATION: Tentative (15-17 years) Transition (18-21 years) and Trial (22-24 years)
- iii. ESTABLISHMENT: (Trial 25-30 years) Stabilization (31-44 years).
- iv. MAINTENANCE: (45-64 years)
- v. DECLINE: Declaration (65-70 years) Retirement 70 years and above.

Super further develops the idea of three model theories, approach to career development and choice in which he shows how various roles, played in various aspects of life, interact to map out career out career life of people.

The theories cited so far are applicable to our own situations, since the most crucial issue every individual encounters and resolves in life is decision about career. This is because it is clearly central to our lives and we spend substantial amount of time, energy and life in career. Moreover, the career we engage in, provides us with status, recognition, affiliation, psychological and socio-economic products essential for participation in complex society and life satisfaction. By and large, however, it seems that the initial choice of occupation in Nigeria by young people is heavily influenced by:

Socio-Cultural Theories: This is a popular theory of career choice which has been regarded as the layman's explanation of how he entered his first occupation. It is a theory based on choice factors, because the individual did not deliberately plan to enter into such job, rather circumstances forced it on him, he only succumbed to the influence of a powerful stimulus. This theory has been found to have a universal applicability, even though its impact is now waning in develop countries where people from tender ages have had opportunities of having an insight into who they are, what they want to be as well as the availability of numerous career opportunities.

In case of Nigeria, it has been found that a greater proportion of workers, who also happen to be the first generation of educated individuals tend to attribute the choice of their first job, to accident or chance factor.

Our experience of the recent past has also shown that many Nigerians who *became* soldiers during the civil war did so, without planning for its not that they were conscripted, but they were looking for any kind of job, they happened to have accidentally stumbled into centers of recruitment. Other examples of people who got into jobs accident include the emergency contractors, arranges who were gun runners at the civil war period and the boom construction business men and women of 1970-75.

Between 1979-1983, many illiterates and semi-illiterates who know little or nothing about ruling a country became politicians while many patriotic and experienced individuals were skeptical of the future of political applicable to the Nigerian culture as at now, as one would expect in other pre-industrialized societies.

Economic Theory: The economic theory as postulated by classical economist (e.g. Smith, Mill etc.) of the 18th century emphasized the consideration of monetary and other material advantages as the major factors in the choice of

an occupation. In other words an individual will select an occupation which he anticipates will pay him the highest income and provide him other fringe benefit.

The peak of the academic degree you have, will determine your position in your place of work, because occupations which pay the least are those which have surplus labour. In other words, the classification economic principles that the occupational distribution of work in the labour market is a function of supply and demand as reflected in income differential between occupations.

It was realized that the mad rush for wealth and desire to overcome poverty have led to all forms of corruptions which have «finally crippled the nations economic potency.

The Need Theory: This theory lays emphasis on the desires and wants which stimulate an individual to prefer one occupation to another. In other words, vocational choice is largely depend on the physical emotional needs of an individual. Since needs are in hierarchical order, there is always the tendency for a new and higher needs, to emerge as soon as the lower need is sufficiently gratified. The lower needs include physiological, safety, belongingness, love and esteem, while the higher ones include knowledge, self-understanding and self-actualization. Job selection is considered one of the primary sources of need satisfaction.

As in developed countries, it is also observed in Nigeria that workers first need in seeking a job is to satisfy the physiological and safety needs through a basic salary while employment try to attain safety needs through assured physical security in works place and get assurance for continuity of employment and programme for the rainy day. After the achievement of these needs, workers are known to have expressed through trade unionism or individually the need for regard, esteem and later permission to use initiative, to accomplish and finally to reach the top of their profession. Inability to achieve a particular need or more, up the ladder of needs is known to have caused frustration and lack of job satisfaction in many workers.

Research findings seem to support this theory in Nigeria. The study by Gesinde (1978) showed that teachers disliked their profession primarily because of negative public image, lack of recognition by society, poor conditions of salary and because teaching has not been accorded in full professional status.

Elegbdc (1977) found that his subjects detested leaching because of poor salary and poor conditions of service, clerical work because it is too common and dull.

Asagwara (1979), found that the primary need of his subjects is self expression and Ologunlcko (1980) also found self expression as the primary need of engineering students.

Development Theories: The choice of an occupation is not made hurriedly. As you grow from infancy to childhood to adolescence and adulthood, you would have passed through a number of experience e.g. you would have seen workers in action, as you worked before, you internalized these experiences throughout the school period and when you graduate, you will consider these experiences in relation to occupational choice. These developmental theory counters the assumption that career choices take place at a given point in time. Developmentalists are of the opinion that "the selection of occupations are made at a number of different points in one's life and that they constitute a continuous process which starts in late childhood and ends in early adulthood". Ginzberg, Super and Tiedcman, as the critical and identifiable stages which an individual passes through before finally achieving vocational maturity. These are fantasy tentative and realistic stages.

Research findings seem to support this theoretical view point. For instance, Okonkwo (1979), in his study of some determinants of vocational preference in Nigerian secondary school student found that age significantly differentiated the career preferences of his subject. The 13-15 years olds were more interested in medicine than those who were 16-17 and 19 years and above.

Gasinde (1976), discovered that students at lower levels of secondary education were more attracted by the glamour and prestige of some careers, than the students in the middle and upper classes. For instance 51% of form II, 39% of form IV and 31% of form V students have preference for careers in medicine. Almost the same pattern could be noticed in the preference for engineering and nursing. It seems that the older one becomes the higher at the level of education, the more realistic an individual becomes in the choice of a career, but it does appear that even form V students in Nigeria are still not vocationally mature as is expected of their age, hence they still choose prestigious job.

Danga (1975), undertook his survey to find out whether the type of school had any effect on career choice of students in North Central State of Nigeria. The result revealed that students in vocational schools such as technical, commercial teachers college have chosen career related to their training though there are some who deviated and indicated their desire to engage in occupations other than the ones they are trained for.

This was in harmony with the survey conducted by Achcbc (1972), Durojaiye (1973), Fahunm (1982), Sesay (1984), and Ipaye (1986), have revealed that an overwhelming majority of students are largely unrealistic in their academic and career aspiration and occupational choices. This unrealistic choice could be attributed to the fact that the students are more concern about prestige attached to jobs, rather than it relation to the courses or training they are undertaking.

Career must be well chosen and planned because students are not the same in nature, abilities and capabilities. These theories explain career development and the various reasons why students accidentally choose career and the role its plays in our life.

From these theories we will deduce that career choice is a conscious and deliberate activity an individual venture into, for so many reasons. And since we have different kinds of careers available in the work world, people tend to choose career that they found suitable for them, or that meet their needs and demand.

Factors Influencing Students Career Choice in Nigeria

Many counseling scholars, especially Super and Crites (1962). have itemized the determinants or correlated of vocational choice. All the theories we Have discussed so far arc inclusive, but may be. we have not highlighted some of the students in secondary schools.

We are going to discuss them in order of importance there may be variations in the hierarchy because your experiences or circumstances and conditions in your culture and environment arc different from our own culture or climate. The factors arc as follows:

1. **Sex Influence on Career Choice:** In choosing a vocation, sexes plays a great role in most parts of the country the culture role expectations of men and women arc known to be clearly defined.

Some studies have shown significant relationships between « sex and occupational aspiration preferences and choices. Since boys and girls undergo different socializing experiences, they tend to learn different sex roles and behaviour patterns and therefore develop different interest and these role and interest later becomes dominant factors in career choice.

Okonkwo (1980) in his study of some determinants of vocational preferences among Nigerian secondary school students to be a determinant. Boys preferred engineering, medicine and agriculture, while girl preferred nursing and teaching.

Gesinde (1976), in his own study also found that sex plays an important role in determining the career preference of students. Other research findings which have supported sex differences work of Yuh (1980), who in her study correlates vocational orientation of some Nigerian secondary school students, discovered that male students significantly preferred realistic, investigative, and enterprising careers.

Sosanya (1980), found that male were significantly more interested in out door, mechanical and persuasive occupation than girls, while girls Were more interested in computational, artistic, literary and clerical activities.

2. **Rural/Urban Influence on Career Choice:** The influence of the environment has been empirically shown in the career preferences and choice of individuals.

Asagwara (1979), and Aghamelu (1980), discovered that students from urban school locations significantly possessed self- expression values and experienced, little external, influence on their choice and careers.

Osuagwa (1980), found that students from rural settings significantly expressed interest in scientific, artistic, and clerical jobs, more than urban students.

Ayangbile (1980), in her own study in Jos found that village students were more externally influenced in their choice of medicine, as career and also had higher extrinsic reward, self expression and people oriented values than town and city students.

3. **Influence of School and Curricular on Career Choice:** The school is a significant agent of socialization where individuals acquire various attitudes, knowledge and skills which eventually influence career choice.

Research finding have therefore indicated a strong relationship between the kinds of school attended by individuals, the nature of curricula offering to which individuals have been exposed and career plans or choices. For example Genside (1976), in his study of 325 secondary forms III-IV students, found some differences in the career preference of students attending three kind of secondary schools these are all males, all females and mixed schools. The result shows that students attending all males schools significantly preferred engineering, agriculture, architecture and business occupations, and those attending all female schools above others, pharmacy, law chemical occupations, while those in mixed schools preferred medical, nursing and teaching careers.

4. **Influence of Religion on Career Choice:** Religion is powerful tool in deciding what vocation to follow, because one has to consider the level of morality inherent in the vocation.

Religion plays an important role in the life of an individual, as it definitely has influence on ones choice of friends, spouse, job and value about life.

Elegbede (1977), in his study of non-preference, found that his subjects didn't like law because, "it perpetuates, injustice, corruption and immoral dealings". This writer is not in possession of other empirical studies relating religious background to career choice.

However, there-if no doubt that readers from their work places or neighborhoods would be familiar with jobs that were considered rejected on the basis of religious orientations. For example a good Christian cannot work in hotel filled with prostitutes, or in a place filled with gamblers. Neither will

a devote Muslim will consider working in a beer parlour or shop in which pork is sold.

5. **Influence of Economy on Career Choice:** The consideration of monetary and other material advantages as a major factor in the choice of an occupation. In other words an individual will select an occupation which he anticipates will pay him the highest income and provide him other fringe benefits. The peak of the academic degree you have will determine your position in your place of work, because occupations which pay the least are those which have surplus labour.

Soyenwo (1977), in her study of occupational value patterns of Nigerian University education undergraduate, found that the extrinsic (e.g. money, praise etc.) reward, oriented value was in the third place among factors influencing career preferences of the undergraduate.

6. **The Influence of Child Rearing Style and Family Value on Career Choice:** To great extent, the impact of the family in which a person lives and the family goals and objectives, an individual learns to value on his career choice. Gensinde (1973), discovered that 66% of students in teacher training colleges and 56% of those in technical colleges were influenced by parents and significant other to enter those vocational programmes.

Okeke (1977), and Agbamelu (1980) studied relationship between parental occupations and their children's occupational preferences. Okeke found that 60% of the children's were willing to take after their father's occupation (medicine) while 23% were willing to follow the mother occupations, (nursing). On the whole only 22% were interested in all father's occupations, while only 17% were willing to follow all mothers occupations. But in Agbamelu's study, 48% and 74% respectively of the children were interested in teaching as mothers' and fathers' occupation, while 70% of the children were willing to follow nursing as mothers' occupation.

Anne Roe (1957), studies and observes family interaction and child rearing styles and gave a theory:

If the attitudes of parents are warm and accepting, Roe says that the children will develop a major orientation of interest towards people and choose occupations which involve contact with people.

If parents avoid the children either through rejection or neglect, Roe proposes that the children will develop a major orientation towards activities which do not involve people such as outdoor technological and scientific occupation.

7. **Influence of Lack of Vocational Information:** It has been shown in researches that this factor determines the choice of vocation. For example, a person who lacks information about vocations may choose vocation wrongly.

Gensindc (1973), discovered that students who lacked information went to teacher training colleges and technical centers and they felt unhappy about those choices.

Kuti (1979) did one research among students who lacked information and choose wrong vocations. As a result, Kuti gave them information and changed their choices.

8. **Influence of Age on Career Choice:** Age, experience and maturation determine who should be given a job. Pupils in the primary schools and those in form one and two of secondary schools are regarded as minor. They are not experience in choosing an occupation. They are in the fantasy stage that is, they like every occupation.

People in form three to form six are regarded as being in the tentative stage. They have not worked before, thus they do consider few vocations. University graduates are regarded as being in the realistic stage. They have realized that choice of occupation is very important. In order words, realism is a factor.

9. **Personality/Self-Concept and Identity:** Personality plays an important role in choosing a vocation. A person look at himself, identify himself and should conclude, "thus is the right vocation for me. I am going to be happy in this vocation". A person filled with anxiety nervousness cannot be a successful politician and cannot be an officer in the armed forces.

He will have to consider a vocation in which he can be calm and confident.

We choose occupations to meet our needs and job satisfaction, depends upon the extent to which the job that we hold meets those needs. The degree of satisfaction is determined by the ratio between what we have and what we want. If an individuals needs are not met by the overall working conditions, he will experience dissatisfaction.

Job satisfaction is not a single variable but it is a cluster of factors. Many individuals working are not interested in huge salaries but they want achievements, productiveness, accomplishment and self-actualization.

Holland (1959), explain vocational satisfaction this way "stability and achievement depend on the congruence between one's personality and the environment in which one works", people search for environments and vocations that will permit them to exercise their skills and abilities, to express their attitudes and values to take on agreeable problems and roles and avoid disagreeable ones.

Satisfaction

What is satisfaction? Bernard (1957), defined satisfaction as the fulfillment of human needs or approach to their fulfillment, and concluded that satisfaction is the result of a successful (tension- reducing) activity that seems from motives. In short satisfaction means the extent or the degree to which a person is pleased or happy with his job.

When a person is trying to choose a vocation he will have aims or objectives. He will consider the salary, evaluate the working condition (promotion, advancement, rewards), he will assess the nature of the work (Is it safe? What are the hours of working? Is it prestigious and dignifying? When he resumes at work, he will study the management. The boss relationship with the workers, rules and regulations). He will also consider the security of the job (If the work is expanding, if salaries are paid regularly, if fringe benefits and yearly bonus are good; if the employers do not retire or terminate the appointment of workers at will). He will also think about his own family's feeling in relation to the work, (if it has to involve traveling, and so on).

Conclusion

The impact of education upon a person depends on the effectiveness and wisdom with which determine his life purpose and goals.

When an individual looks for work and he applies to be employed, he has considered everything pertaining to the work situation. He assumes that he will adjust to his new job, if he faces minor problems, such as staff relation he will maladjusted. But problems should be expected. Anderson (1949), says, "life is not an easy, straight path, in which the person can achieve without obstacles or satisfy his wishes without interference".

If a worker is assuming that all conditions in the occupation will be Utopia, he will not be realistic. There are many strains and stresses to which individuals are subjected in vocation. Many strains and stresses are such, that one cannot envisage before he accept the job. If a worker is able to minimize or solve problems in the occupation, positively and happily, he will be deemed to have adjusted. When a worker develops an inadequate or poor mode of adjustment to his occupational environment, he becomes tense, takes out his difficulty to others, and he will be dominated by the problems or situations and he will be frustrated.

Therefore career must be carefully chosen, well planned, organized, implemented and evaluated because students are not the same in nature, abilities and capabilities.

Contribution of guidance and counseling services to make a wise choice of a career, including bringing to the students increased understanding of educational vocational and social information needed, will lead to a successful choice.

Recommendation

Parents should encourage and allow their children to choose career of their interest. Functional guidance and counseling units should be established in all institutions of higher learning, and professional counselors should be employed to serve in the units, this would facilitate adequate and proper educational, vocational decision and choice. It will also help to eliminate subsequent or constant change of course and careers among students.

The government should introduce career education, and also set up career and information on available opportunities, requirement and guidelines to the guidance, and counseling unit for proper utilization.

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