

Parental Influence on Career Choice of Secondary School Children in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State

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Abstract

The major purpose of this study was to investigate the parents' influence on the career choice of their children in some selected schools in Ondo West Local Government Area (OWLGA) of Ondo State. The population comprised all the Senior Secondary School II students in Ondo West Local Government Area. Sample used comprised 256 S.S. II students randomly drawn from the population. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Data were analysed using mean and t-test. The findings revealed, among others, that the influence of parents on their children's career choice was minimal, parents did not aid their children to study another course from that which they had chosen, and parents only advised their children on subjects to offer. Based on the findings, it was recommended that parents need to educate their children and always meet the basic needs of the children, school counselors and teachers are encouraged to give equal attention to male and female children on knowledge acquisition about career choice.

Keywords: Parental, Influence, Career, Guidance, Vocational, School, Counselors

Introduction

Career plays a very fundamental and significant role in the life of the individual not only because they determine the pattern of income but also because they affect the individual's personality and concepts in life (Dick and Rallis, 1991). Career is the totality of work one does in his life time and is person-centred. It is of utmost importance to every individual as he or she prepares for the future (Palmer, 2005; Rothstein and Rouse, 2011).

Children have been observed in most cases not to have absolute freedom of their own especially in Nigeria. They operate under parental and family influences in almost all spheres of their lives even when they are already adolescents. Families, parents and guidance in particular, play

significant role in the occupational aspiration and career goal development of their children. Without parental approval or support, students and young adults are often reluctant to pursue or even explore diverse career possibilities (Wong and Liu, 2010). Most parents often choose classes for their children immediately they get to Senior Secondary School. Children from high socio-economic homes are the most influenced by parents in their choice of subjects for study at the school certificate level. Children from low socio-economic status homes tend to be those whose choices have been least influenced by their parents. This is not unexpected; as such parents are not likely to be familiar with what goes on in the schools (Odeunmi, 2004).

Students all over the world are usually faced with the task of career decision taking. The choice of careers, subjects, and courses of study in schools and of subsequent paths to follow, are always difficult problems facing students. In Nigeria, many youths go into unsuitable careers due to ignorance, inexperience peer pressure, advice from friends, parents and teachers or as a result of the prestige attached to certain jobs without adequate vocational guidance and career counseling (Salami, 1999). The career choice process of young people can easily be compared to rocks in a rock polisher (Hairsto, 2002). They are exposed to different levels of career guidance. All kinds of people (friends, teachers, school counselors, family members, and parents) grind away at them as to career choice but parents are the big rocks in the tumbler (Adeyemo, 2004). Parents are major influences in the lives of their children. Family members particularly parents are the most influential determinants of career guidance need. Neither teacher nor counselors can replace the influence parents have on their sons and daughters' career plans (Adeyemo, 2004). Studies have found that college students and young adults cite parents as an important influence on their choice of career (Leung, Hou, Gati and Li, 2011).

In choosing career for a child, the decision should involve: the area of interest of the child; the capability and status of the child; the encouragement received by the learner from his/her environment; the intellectual ability of the learner i.e intelligence quotient. Each individual undertaking the process is influenced by many factors, including the context in which they live, their personal aptitudes, and educational attainment

(Bandura, Barbaranelli, Capara and Pastorelli, 2001). Ferry (2006) asserts that adolescent occupational choice is influenced by many factors, including life context, personal aptitudes and education attainment. He contends further that whether college-bound or work-bound, meeting the challenge of this developmental milestone is critical in adolescents' lives. Researchers have attempted to understand the variables that influence students' occupational goals (e.g family, level of parental education, school, peers, personality and socio economic status). other family variables that have been shown to influence career aspirations include the parents' occupation. The father's occupational status is highly correlated with his son's occupation (Scott, Gowans, Wright, Brennei, Banner and Boone, 2011). Career choice is a very crucial and important decision that should not be imposed but the child should be supported by the parents and the teacher should also contribute to the development of the child. Parents serve as significant interpreters of children for information about the world and children's abilities (Hall, Kelly and Gutwein, 2000). Parents have the knowledge of the resources available to them and are able to create a positive environment for their children, providing books, educational toys and tools, tutors and much more (Ferry, 2006). Parents who communicate openly with children are able to talk about careers, choices and the child's future (Wong and Liu, 2010).

The importance of parental influence upon their children's career choice is consistently important, even across gender and racial lines. Although schools, peers and the student's community all have an impact on child's self identity and career

choice (Skorikov and Vondracek, 2011). The parent's expectation and perceptions of vocational fit for their children have been found to be the key roles in shaping their career choice (Ferry, 2006). One consistent finding in research suggest that adolescents own aspirations are influenced by their parents' aspirations or expectation for them. When adolescents perceive their parents to have high educational expectations for them, adolescents are likely to have higher aspirations for themselves (Osborne, Archer, Dillon, Wallis and Wong, 2013). This influence has been so strong as to over-ride the influence of teachers and career counselors who likely know more about the career field in question but were not as well known and as trusted as the children's parents for this type of decision (Creamer and Laughlin, 2005). Parents tend to create the strongest impression on their children's vocational choice more than any other group including counselors, teachers, friends or even people working in the identified occupation of desire (Bardick, Bernes, Magnusson and Witko, 2002). Parents as the primary role models for their youngsters, influence their morals, ideas, outlook on life and what they want to be when they grow up (Borges, Navamo and Grover, 2012).

In Nigeria the attitude of individuals and families males and females even highly educated and others towards career choice show that people are in grant of the concept and importance of career as means to uplift the quality of life of an individual. Prestigious occupations like Teaching, Medicine, Nursing, Piloting, Accounting, News casting, Engineering, e.t.c demand special clothing for corporate dressing. Parents due to financial problem cannot meet the demand of the career and

encourage the child to go for other courses. (Rothstein and Rouse, 2011).

Today many children that choose career by themselves are still inadequate. This may be due to the fact that not many children choose their discipline as a career by themselves. Choosing career by children in the contemporary world amidst the numerous numbers of careers should be given proper and optimum attention so as to avoid unnecessary and unpalatable circumstances that may result in the future (Jawitz, Case and Tshabalala, 2000). This decision making should involve the child, the parent and the teacher (Sukovicff, 2004). Children look up to their parents as well as their peers in equal measure but separated which group they would talk to by the nature of the issue. For issue as what clothes to wear, what social events to attend and who to date e.t.c the peers were the dominant advisors. However, when the child required information on topics such as career choice they looked to their parents. Parents state that their assistance with their children's career development is an important parental task (Young and Friesen, 2000). The ideals of the parent set the tone for the career choices of the adolescent (Lankard, 2011). Family processes and ideals greatly affect the child's choice of career because children view the family values as concrete. If a family does not value education, the child might choose a vocational career. If a family is hard-working and hands-on, the child might choose a shorter college career in exchange for a life in construction or other technical trade. If a family hold education as the highest standard, it is most likely the child will attend college and choose a career based on that experience.

Campbell and Unger (2004), in their article, quoted Vance Peavy (2001) who stated that there is no longer a predetermine path or a logical linear progression from school to the workplace to retirements. Rather there is an opportunity to design a work life which is satisfying to the individual and which can be redesigned as needs, interests, and life experiences changed. A wise career choice might be understood as a decision that has been taken upon a realistic filtering of all career options and personal competencies generally required for a particular job opening. It results in truly valuable expertise and personal satisfaction.

It has been observed that at least one child of parents always take the occupation of the father or the mother. Parental careers influence children. If Mom is a high-powered executive, the kids will have higher career goals. Dads also have an influence. Hard-working dads who consistently better themselves through job advancement or schooling will raise children with similar high career aspirations (Scott, Gowans, Wright, Brennei, Banner and Boone, 2011; Borges, Navamo and Grover, 2012). When occupation life was less highly specialized, parents assumed the responsibility of only informing their children about occupations but in some cases choosing for them (Ajayi, 2000). Parents convey their influences to children through interactions such as conversations and through their reactions (both verbal and nonverbal). This then affects what children think, say and perceive about various careers (Leung, Hou, Gati and Li, 2011). Even though parents have been typically thought of as having positive influences on their children's career decision-making, it is also possible that parents are negatively

affecting their children's vocational development as well (Bryant, Zvonkovic and Reynolds, 2006).

Purpose of the study

The major purpose of the study was to investigate parents' influence on their children's career choice. Specifically, the study determined:

1. ways children -parent relationships influence the children's career choice in Ondo West local government area .
2. the forms of counseling on career choice the children are given in schools in Ondo West local government.
3. ways by which improvement could be made to enhance effective choice of career by the children.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the ways children -parent relationships influence children's career choice?
2. What are the forms of counseling children are given in schools on career choice?
3. What are the various ways by which improvement could be made to enhance effective choice of career by the children?

Research Hypothesis

H0₁: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female children on how parents influence their choice of career.

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey design.

Area of the study:- The area of the study was Ondo West Local Government Area

(OWLGA) of Ondo State. Ondo West local government is one of the 18 local government areas of Ondo state. It has 12 wards. They are Lekere, Bagbe, Laje, Igbado, Odojomu, Okelisa, Surulere, Oka, Odosida, Yaba, Newtown, Igunsin. The linguistic homogeneity of the place is Yoruba language.

Population for the study: The population comprised the SSS II students in the public secondary schools in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State. There are 5, 443 SS II students in all the 32 public senior secondary schools (Ministry of Education, Ondo State, 2013).

Sample for the study: A sample of 256 SSS II students was randomly selected from 16 public secondary schools. The 16 schools were randomly selected from the 32 public secondary schools in Ondo West local government area. Sixteen SSS II students were randomly selected from each of the 16 public secondary schools that were used for the study, to make a total of 256 SSS II students.

Instrument for data collection: A structured questionnaire based on a 5-point scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree was used for data collection. The instrument was subjected to validation by two experts from the Departments of

Educational Foundations and Home Economics, Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo. The result obtained for the reliability coefficient of the sections was 0.76.

Data Collection and Data Analysis Techniques:

Two hundred and sixty five (265) copies of questionnaire were distributed by the researcher and two trained assistants in order to get the aggregate number (256) required. The completed copies of questionnaire (256) were retrieved. Mean (\bar{x}) was used to analyze the data collected. Any item with a mean score of 3.0 and above was regarded as agreed. Similarly, any item scoring a mean below 3.0 was regarded as disagreed. T-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Findings

Ways parent - children relationship influence children career choice.

- Children live with their parents (Table 1)
- Parents buy the entire textbooks of their children and advice them on the subjects to offer (Table 1)
- Parents do not go against their children's choice of offered courses (Table 1)

Table 1: Mean Ratings of Responses and t-test analysis by Male and Female students on how parent children relationship influence their career choice

S/N	Ways by which parent-children relationship influence career choice	\bar{x}_3	SD	\bar{x}_1	\bar{x}_2	\bar{x}_1^2	\bar{x}_2^2	t-cal	R
1.	I live with my parents so they influence my studies	4.17	0.936	4.38	0.872	3.88	0.742	-14.096	NS
2.	My parents buy the textbooks I use for my studies	4.21	0.789	4.36	0.384	4.01	0.4777	-15.831	NS
3.	My parents advice me on subjects to offer	3.89	1.164	3.99	1.690	3.76	0.895	-15.126	NS
4.	My parents aid me in my subject assignment and studies	4.13	0.921	4.27	1.045	3.95	0.528	-15.014	NS
5.	My parents want me to study another course than my choice	2.71	1.403	2.66	2.354	2.78	1.464	-25.877	NS

$N_1 = 136, N_2 = 120, N_3 = 256$

Keys: N_3 = Total respondents, N_2 = Male students, N_1 = Female students, R= Remark

SD = Standard Deviation, \bar{x}_1 = Mean response of female students, \bar{x}_2 = Mean response of male students, \bar{x}_3 = Respondents' mean response, \bar{x}_1^2 = Variance of N_1 , \bar{x}_2^2 = Variance of N_2 NS = Not Significant

Table 1 reveals that the respondents agree with items 1, 2, 3 and 4 and disagreed with item 5 because the mean is below the mean cut-off (3.0). The t-calculated values of items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, were less than the t-tabulated at 5% level of significance. This means there is no significant difference in the mean values of male and female children on how parents influence their choice of careers. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted at 0.05 level of significance.

- School counselors do not impose subjects on students and students are not influenced by friends.
- School organizes career choice talk annually.
- Children choose their careers because they have personal interest in it, they score high marks in subjects relating to it and because they want to take after their parents choice.
- Children choose their careers because it is popular and many people admire it.

Forms of counseling on the career choice children are given in school.

Table 2: Mean Rating of Responses by Male and Female Students on Forms of Counseling on the Career Choice Children are getting in school

S/N	Forms of counseling	\bar{x}_1	Decision	\bar{x}_2	Decision	\bar{x}_3	Decision
1.	My school counselor did not counsel me on career choice.	2.73	Disagreed	3.04	Agreed	2.86	Disagreed
2.	My school organizes career choice talks annually.	3.57	Agreed	3.75	Agreed	3.65	Agreed
3.	My teacher motivates me to learn.	4.13	Agreed	3.94	Agreed	4.05	Agreed
4.	I do not go for career choice Talk.	3.16	Agreed	3.18	Agreed	3.17	Agreed
5.	My school counselor chose my subjects for me base on my performance.	2.53	Disagreed	2.86	Disagreed	2.67	Disagreed
6.	I chose my career because of my friend's influence.	2.20	Disagreed	2.49	Disagreed	2.33	Disagree
7.	I chose my career because it is popular and many people admire it.	3.17	Agreed	3.39	Agreed	3.27	Agreed
8.	I chose my career because I have personal interest in it.	4.38	Agreed	4.00	Agreed	4.22	Agreed
9.	I chose my career because I want to take after my parents' choice.	3.90	Agree	3.29	Agreed	3.06	Agreed
10.	I chose my career based on high marks I scored in those subjects relating to it.	3.61	Agreed	3.78	Agreed	3.68	Agreed

$N_1 = 136, N_2 = 120, N_3 = 256$

Keys: N_3 = Total respondents, N_2 = Male students, N_1 = Female students

\bar{x}_1 = Mean response of female students, \bar{x}_2 = Mean response of male students, \bar{x}_3 = Respondents' mean response

Table 2 reveals that students agreed on 3 items (2, 3 and 4) on forms of career counseling children get from schools while they disagreed on 2 items (1 and 5). This implied that school counselors do advice children on choice of careers but did not impose subjects to be offered on the students, teachers motivates students to learn yet students do not go for career talks organized in schools. Table 2 also revealed that students agreed on items 7, 8, 9, and

10 concerning whether their career choice was based on personal interest, conviction and well planned guidance instruction, but disagreed on item 6, this implied that children's choices of careers were major because of their popularity and people's admiration for them but not because they are influenced by friends. More so children's choice of careers were due to personal interest and because they want to take after their parents.

Table 3: Ways by which improvement could be made to enhance effective choice of career by the children

S/N	Ways of enhancing effective choice of career by children	\bar{x}_3	\bar{x}_1	\bar{x}_2	Remarks
1.	Going for regular counseling on career choice will help students.	4.27	4.41	4.09	Agreed
2.	Having interest in subjects relating to students' career choice will help them improve on the subjects.	4.29	4.48	4.05	Agreed
3.	Adequate use of instructional materials by teachers will improve students' interest on difficult subjects.	4.05	4.17	3.89	Agreed
4.	Parental motivation and encouragement from parents help students a lot.	4.17	4.29	4.00	Agreed
5.	Students must be focused and determined to succeed.	4.16	4.20	4.15	Agreed

$N_1 = 136, N_2 = 120, N_3 = 256$

Keys: N_3 = Total respondents, N_2 = Male students, N_1 = Female students

\bar{x}_3 = Mean response of female students, \bar{x}_2 = Mean response of male students, \bar{x}_1 = Respondents' mean response

Table 3 reveals that the respondents agreed with all the ways to enhance effective choice of career, with their means above the cut-off point of 3.0 and above.

Discussion of findings

Table 1 showed that the male and female students agreed with items 1-4 as ways by which children - parent relationship influence children's career choice, while item 5 was generally disagreed upon. Parents influence female children more than male children because they live with their parents more than the male children; get entire textbooks they needed in school from their parents and receive advice from their parents on courses to offer. Adeyemo (2004), Leung, Hou, Gati and Li (2011) corroborated this finding. They mentioned that parents are the most influential determinants of career guidance need and that neither teacher nor counselors can

replace the influence parents have on their sons and daughters career plans. The male and female children were not expected by their parents to study another course from that which they had chosen. Hall, Kelly and Gutwein (2000); Wong and Liu (2010) observed that parents serve as significant interpreters of children for information about the world and children's abilities. Also Ferry (2006) stated that parents have knowledge of the resources available to them and are able to create a positive environment for their children, providing books, educational toys and tools, tutors and much more. Thus, long stay of female children with parents has significant effects on how much responsibility the parents carry on them. In order to identify the forms of counseling children are given in school on career choice, Table 2 showed that school counselors do advice children on choice of careers affirmed by Creamer

and Laughlin (2005); Skoncov and Vondracek (2011) who stated that teachers and career counselor know more about career field and have impact on child's self identity and career choice respectively. Female children have closer relationship with their school counselor and far more motivated by them than male children and thus, got more influenced by the school than the male children. The reason could be that male children get their companies from their peers and friends and far believed in themselves. Female children pay better attention to the school activities than the male children. Generally, the children's choice of careers were due to personal interest and aspirations for themselves as stated by Osborn, Archer, Dillon, Wallis and Wong (2013) but the female children have more interest in their career because they do choose their career for the purpose of future sustenance as was stated by Campbell and Unger (2004).

The findings in Table 3 revealed that the male and female children agreed that to significantly improve effectiveness of choice of careers made by children, the following items have to be considered important. These are: going for regular counseling, having interest in subject relating to the choice of career, adequate use of instructional materials by teachers which would ease the understanding of difficult subjects, motivation and encouragement from the parents, having focus and determination. The above mentioned are in line with Bandura, Barbaranelli, Capara and Pastorelli (2001); Scott, Gowans, Wright, Brennei, Banner and Boone (2011); Borges, Navamo and Grover (2012), who mentioned that career choice by children should involve the encouragement received by them from their environment, their intellectual ability

i.e intelligence quotient, interaction with parents and area of interest of the children respectively. This implies that the above mentioned are regular even though children do not attend career choice talk organized by their school. The children equally see the need for it as it has a great chance of helping them to have clearer understanding about their future in their chosen discipline.

Conclusion

The study has investigated the parents influence on the career choice of their children in some selected secondary schools in Ondo West local government area, in Ondo State. The study revealed that parents do not have any significant influence on the choice of career their children made. The schools counselors are underperforming in rendering career choice advice by only counseling on choice of career but neglecting giving orientation on subjects to offer. Children are reluctant to be enlightened on career choice in the school and the choice of career made by the children is based on self interest, subject performance, degree of societal admiration and influence of parental choice of career.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:-

- Equal attention should be given to male and female students by school counselors to give them equal chance for knowledge acquisition about choice of career.
- School counselors should lay more emphasis on the intricacies of every subject for children to be able to choose that which they love and able to live for.
- Understandable instructional materials with adequate illustration should be

employed by teachers to instruct children in school.

- Parents and guardians are encouraged to motivate their children in their choice of career and not to choose for them.

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