

Factors Influencing the Career Choice of Senior Secondary School Students in Hong Local Government Area of Adamawa State, Nigeria

Dorcas Oluremi FAREO Ph.D¹, Javan GARKUWA²

¹*Correspondent Author, Department of Science Education, Adamawa State University, P. O. Box 411, Mubi Nigeria. E mail: dorkyfareo@gmail.com*

²*Department of Science Education, Adamawa State University, Mubi*

ABSTRACT

The study determined the extent religion influence choice of career among secondary school students; examined the extent gender parity would influence on career choice of students; and investigated the extent parental influence would affect choice of career among senior secondary school students in Hong Local government. Survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised of 24 senior secondary schools and 7,338 students. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample out four schools. Stratified sampling technique was employed to draw 400 students using gender and class as strata. The research instrument named “Factors Influencing the Career Choice of Senior Secondary School Students’ Questionnaire” adopted from Salami and Salami (2013) was used to use to collect data. The validity of the research instrument was carried out by two experts both in Counselling Psychology and Test and Measurement. Test-retest method was used to carry out the reliability of the instrument, and the reliability co-efficient was 0.81. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as mean percentage and t-test analysis. The study findings were that parent socio-economic status, education and family career preferences influence students’ career choice. Also, there was a significant difference between male and female students parental influence on choice of career. Based on the findings, the study concluded that career choices of students were greatly influenced by parents’ occupation, attitude and family career preferences. It was recommended that professional career counsellors should include the students in selecting process, considering interest, ability, skills and personality of the students. Career choice process should include experimentation, trails and error, decision marking and eventual judgment. Therefore, students must be made aware of the processes.

Keywords: *Career choice; factors; career dilemma; parental influence; family preferences*

1. INTRODUCTION

The need for career choices is paramount and mandatory to students and individual persons since in the olden days, most especially at this critical period of changing world of science and technology where students’ always think of what to become. Career choice is the act of choosing between the series of possibilities that a person has in a particular area of work, usually involving more responsibilities as time passes (oxford advanced learner dictionary). Career is the sequential set of experiences and attitudes related to work that an individual has over the span of his/her work life (Abbasi & Sarwat, 2014). Career choice has become a complex task among student in the face of ever changing technology in the information sector Eremie (2014). Edwards and Quinter (2011) state that, career choice has become a complex science with the achievement of information technology, the emergence of post industrial revolution and also job competition. Most student does not have accurate information about occupational opportunities

in order to help them make appropriate career choice, but today, one has only to make due career planning but also exhaustive career research before making a career choice to enable them adjust with the evolving social-economic condition (Wattles, 2009).

Hewitt (2010), states that factors influencing career choice are intrinsic, extrinsic or both. According to him, most people are influenced by career that their parent favours; other follows the career that their educational choice is opened for them. Some choose to follow their passion regardless of how much or little it will make them while others choose the careers that give high income. It has been shown from literature that three areas of students' life affect the career choices they make: environment, opportunity, and personality. Some of the main factors among others in deciding career choice include career opportunities, interest in the course and parental guidance family influence. It has been shown from literature that three areas of students' life affect the career choices they make: environment, opportunity, and personality. Some of the main factors among others in deciding career choice include career opportunities (Pawełczyk, Pawełczyk, & Bielecki, 2007; Edwards & Quinter, 2011; Uyar, Gungormus, & Kuzey, 2011; Reynolds, 2012; Odia & Ogiedu, 2013).

Career selection is one of many important choices students make in determining future plans. This decision will impact them throughout their lives because; the essence of who the student is revolves around what the student wants to do with their life-long work. Career selection has become a complex science with the advent of information technology, the emergence of post industrial revolution and job competition. At secondary school level, a student is expected to have knowledge of what he or she intends to do in the future, this in turn guides the choice of subjects the West African Certificate (WAEC). This decision-making is very important and students must be allowed to choose their careers because it will create awareness in the students mind for the challenges ahead (Joans, 2007). The younger generation is the future of any society. Therefore, their career choices should help them develop the knowledge, skills and attitude needed to successfully examine their lives, while exploring and evaluating a wide range of career options to attain goals in the future.

Similarly, Monica and Kate (2009) identified the inspirational impact of parental education on their children career choice. A research in Kenya on career choice by Edwards and Quinter (2011) shows that, gender, area of residence, school attended, attitude, self employment, prestige of the profession, employment security, financial support, career specialization, career flexibility, personal interest, availability of job, advancement, applied knowledge and learning experience are all regarded as factors influencing career choice among students'. Other factors stated by the student through interview include friend or relative in certain career, religion, political climate of a country. Prestige of a profession; parental influence and gender are the factors influencing career choice among senior secondary school student in Rivers State, Nigeria. The knowledge of the job, self knowledge, parental and peer group constraints, and parental status are basic issues that affect career choice among primary and secondary school students, Ezeani (2013).

In addition, Ogunlade and Akeredolu (2012) examined the influence of counselling on career preference among secondary school student in Ekiti State concluded that there were significant differences in external influence as factors. The study further revealed that significant difference existed among male and female students, showing gender as a factor. In addition, Madu (2011) conducted a study based on the impact of gender on academic performance of 160 Arts-related subjects in Nasarawa State University concluded that female students' preformed significantly better than males Arts-related subjects. Similarly, Buabeng, Ampiah, and Nelson, (2012) studied

female senior high school students' interest in physics as a course of study at the University level in Ghana, concluded that female student's do not prefer Physics as a course of the study at the University level due to limited employment opportunity for females in Physics as a career. Therefore, career choice among senior secondary school students' is most and important if they want to achieve a desired life time goal. Though the factors influencing such choice of a career varies, as it depends on where they found themselves, the socio-economic condition, societal need, demand of a particular country, family preferences and even need for independency, hence this study examine the factors influencing senior secondary school students' career choice in Hong Local Government Area of Adamawa State.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Students' are in dilemma of choosing career in Hong Local Government Area of Adamawa State Nigeria. Once they finish their junior secondary school, factors like parental influence and pressure, peer group, economic status, societal need, prestige of the pr and interest, came into play that makes them to choose what they want to be in life. Normally, students' make wrong choice due to lack of proper guidance from parents, school, and otherwise as a result of that, students' tend to change subjects of their choices all times and finally end up nowhere. This study therefore focuses to find the factors influencing senior secondary students' career choice in Hong Local government Area of Adamawa State Nigeria.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objective are to:

- i. Determine the extent religion would influence choice of career among secondary school students' in Hong Local government Area of Adamawa State.
- ii. Examine the extent gender parity would influence on career choice of senior secondary school students' in Hong Local government Area of Adamawa State.
- iii. Investigate the extent parental influence would affect choice of career among senior secondary school students in Hong local government area.

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i. To what extent does religion influence choice of career among senior secondary school students' in Hong Local government Area of Adamawa State Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent does gender parity influence career choice of senior secondary school students' in Hong Local government Area of Adamawa State Nigeria?
- iii. To what extent does parental influence affect choice of career among senior secondary school students in Hong Local government Area of Adamawa State Nigeria?

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study comprised 24 senior secondary schools and 7,338 students. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample out four schools. Stratified sampling technique was employed to draw 400 students using gender and class as strata. The research instrument titled 'Factors Influencing the Career Choice of Senior Secondary School Students' Questionnaire' (FICCSSSQ) was adopted from Salami and Salami (2013). It contained four sections; Section A contained demographic characteristics such as sex, age, name of school, and local government area. Section B comprised of items relating to influence of religion on students career choice. Section C comprised of items relating to influence of gender parity on students career choice, while Section D comprised of items relating

to influence of parents on students career choice. The respondents were required to respond to each of the items of 'FICCSSQ' on a four point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The content and face validity of the instrument was carried out by two experts both in Guidance and Counselling and in Test and Measurement. Appropriate suggestions were made to improve the quality of the questionnaire by deleting the inappropriate question items, and by modifying some. To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was carried out in Government Day Secondary School Dazala, Mubi South Local Government. The sample from the pilot test was subjected to split-half method and the reliability co-efficient were 0.81. The researcher administered the data to the respondents and collected on the spot. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as mean percentage and t-test analysis.

6. RESULTS

Research Question 1: To what extent does religion influence choice of career among senior secondary students in Hong Local Government Area of Adamawa State Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean scores of respondents on religion influence on choice of career among Senior Secondary School students

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	SD	REMARK
1.	My religion restricted me to the career I choose	2.26	0.04	Not accepted
2.	Religion is the major factor influencing student career choice	2.25	0.04	Not accepted
3.	The career I choose is the only one my religion can support	2.24	0.44	Not accepted
4.	The teaching of my religion influences my career choice	2.24	0.09	Not accepted
5.	Religious leaders always advise students to choose a particular career	2.29	0.03	Not accepted
6.	Religion is not a determinant factor to career choice	2.91	0.21	Accepted

*Accepted (\bar{x} = 2.5 and above); Rejected (\bar{x} = less than 2.5)

Table 1 shows the items relating to the influence of religion on students career choice among students in Hong Local Government Area of Adamawa State. The Table revealed the students does not strongly agree to any of these items but rather they only agreed to the items: My religion is not a determinant factor to career choice (\bar{x} =2.91). The students however disagreed with the following items: My religions restrict me to the career I choose (\bar{x} =2.26), Religion is the major factor influencing student's career choice (\bar{x} =2.25), the career I choose is the only one my religion can support (\bar{x} =2.24), and religious teachers always advise students to choose a particular career (\bar{x} =2.29). It can be concluded that religion does not restrict student to career choice, it is not the major factor influencing student career choice, the career I choose is not the only one my religion can support, the teaching of my religion does not influence my career choice, Religious leaders do not always advise students to choose a particular career and religion is not a determinant factor to career choice.

Research Question 2: To what extent does gender parity influence career choice of Senior Secondary School Students in Hong Local Government Area of Adamawa State of Nigeria.

Table 2: Mean scores of respondents on items relating to influence of gender parity on students career choice

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	SD	REMARK
1	Students gender(male/female) had great influence on career choice	2.70	0.04	Accepted
2	There are some specific career meant for particular gender	2.14	0.13	Not accepted
3	My role model gender influence my career choice	2.84	0.10	Accepted
4	Gender is not a determinant factor to students career choice	2.20	0.09	Not accepted
5	Parents normally choose children career choice based on gender	2.16	0.12	Not accepted
6	My gender is one of the motivating factor that makes me to choose my career	3.02	0.27	accepted

*Accepted ($\bar{x} = 2.5$ and above); Rejected ($\bar{x} =$ less than 2.5)

Table 2 revealed the items related to the influence of gender parity on student's career choice among senior Secondary students in Hong Local Government Area of Adamawa State. The table shows that students agreed to the following items: students gender (male/female) had great influence on career choice ($\bar{x}=2.70$), my role model gender influences my career choice ($\bar{x}=2.84$) and gender is one of the motivating factor that makes me to choose my career ($\bar{x}=3.02$). It shown further in the Table those students disagreed to the following items: there are some specific careers meant for particular gender ($\bar{x}=2.14$), gender is not a determinant factor to student's career choice ($\bar{x}=2.20$), and parents normally choose their career based on gender ($\bar{x}=2.16$). Based on the result from this Table, it can be deduced that the items related to influence of gender parity on students career choice are student's gender, and role model.

Research Question 3: To what extent does parental influence affect choice of career among Senior Secondary Students in Hong Local Government Area of Adamawa State of Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean score of respondents on items relating to influence of parents on students career choice

S/N	ITEM	MEAN	SD	REMARK
1	My parent have great influence on my career choice	2.13	0.32	Not accepted
2	The socio-economic status of my parents influence my career choice	3.02	0.10	Accepted
3	My parents choose my secondary school subject for me	1.93	0.60	Not accepted

S/N	ITEM	MEAN	SD	REMARK
4	Educational status of my parents influence my career choice	2.87	0.03	Accepted
5	The occupation of my parents determine my career choice	2.88	0.03	Accepted
6	My parents family career preferences affects my career choice	2.99	0.08	Accepted
7	My parents attitude influence my career choice	2.97	0.07	Accepted
8	My father dictates what he would do to me	2.15	0.30	Not accepted
9	My mother always want me to abide with what she tells me to do	2.97	0.07	Accepted
10	Career choice is about my life, so my parents cannot decide for me.	3.12	0.18	Accepted

*Accepted (\bar{x} = 2.5 and above); Rejected (\bar{x} = less than 2.5)

Table 3 shows the items related to influence of parents on students career choice among Senior Secondary School Students in Hong Local Government Area of Adamawa State. The Table revealed that students agreed with the following items: The socio-economic status of my parents influence my career choice(\bar{x} =3.02), educational status of my parents influence my career choice(\bar{x} =2.87), The occupation of my parents determine my career choice(\bar{x} =2.88), my parents family career preference affects my career choice(\bar{x} =2.99), my parents attitude influence my career choice(\bar{x} =2.97), my mother always want me to abide with what she tells me to do (\bar{x} =2.97), and career choice is about my life, so my parents cannot decide for me (\bar{x} =3.02), it can be established based on the result that items relating to influence of parents on students career choice are: socio-economic status of parent, educational status of parents and occupation of parent. It further revealed that family career preference and parents attitude influence students career choice.

HO₁: There is no significant difference between male and female students' parental influence and choice of career.

Table 4: t- test Analysis between male and female students' parental influence on choice of career.

Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t-cal	t-critical	Decision
Male	200	2.67	1.49	398	0.068	1.962	Accepted
Female	200	2.71	1.94				

* Not Significant: ($P > 0.05$)

Table 4 shows male and female student parental influence on choice of career, the analysis shows the t-cal. (0.068) is less than the t-critical. (1.962). Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that male student parental influence on choice of career does not differ significantly with the female students' parental influence in choice of career in the study area.

HO₂: There is no significant difference between male and female students' religious influence and choice of career.

Table 5: t- test analysis between male and female student religious influence on choice of careers.

Variable	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t-cal	t-critical	Decision
Male students	200	2.43	0.24				
				398	0.107	0.1962	Accepted
Female students	200	2.46	0.70				

* *Not Significant: (P > 0.05)*

Table 5 revealed the analysis between male and female students religious influence choice of career. The result shows that t-cal. (0.107) is less than the t-critical. (1.962). Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference between male and female student religious influence on choice of career in the study area.

7. DISCUSSION

The analysis of the study was based on the following three factors: influence of religion, gender parity and influence of parents on students' career choice. It is revealed that religion does not influence student career choice. This is not in line with Osakinle and Adegroye (2008), which stated that one of the factors that influence career choice among student is religion affiliation. As to whether gender parity influence career choice or not, this study shows that students who take part in this study are influenced by gender. However most of the students still consider their gender when making their choices. The result is in line with Hall (2010) who reports that individual's career choices are influenced by gender. The findings on influence of parents on career choice revealed that parents socio-economic, educational status, occupation, parent career preference and parents attitude do have influence on their career choices. These findings are in line with Raing and Borders (1997) and Sebald (1989). The findings on Hypothesis one are revealed that the male student's parental influence on choice of career does not differ significantly with the female student's parental influence on choice of career in the study career. This is in line with Eremie, (2014) findings, which revealed that parents do have influence on male and female senior secondary school students on their career choices. The findings on hypothesis two shows that there is no significant difference between male and female student religion influence on choice of career in the study area.

8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, parents socio-economic, educational status, occupation, parent career preference and parent attitude do have influence on their career choice. It was established that career choice was influenced by gender of the students.

Based on the findings of this research, the following were recommended:

- i. Individuals considering to make career choice decision should carefully evaluate available career opportunities against their interest

- ii. Professionals' career counsellor should include the students in selecting process, considering interest, ability, skills and personality of the students.
- iii. Career choice is a processes that include experimentation, trails and error, decision marking and eventual judgment. Therefore, students must be made aware of this processes.
- iv. Students must develop a system that works for them.

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